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THE

DRUSES OF THE LEBANON:

THEIR MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND HISTORY.

WITH A TRANSLATION OF

THEIR RELIGIOUS CODE.

BY

GEORGE WASHINGTON CHASSEAUD,

LATE OF BEYROUT, SYRIA.

"When I travelled, I took a particular delight in hearing the songs and fables that are come from father to son, and are most in vogue among the common people of the countries through which I passed."—*Spectator.*

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NEWELL, PRINTER, MILE END ROAD.

TO LADY FRANKLIN.

Dear Madam,

Looking round to select a person to whom I might fitly dedicate this work, I recollected the very kind and flattering encouragement you gave me, while with a trembling hand and anxious heart I was penning its contents. Although it was my intention to reserve the pleasure of showing my gratitude by a work more deserving your attention, I hope that, however unpretending, the present composition will be acceptable.

When your Ladyship did my home at Beyrout the honour of a visit, and became the guest of my parents, I was not then in being; and little did they think that a son yet unborn would one day write a book, and that you would so encouragingly second his

first attempts at authorship:—so little do we know what fortune has in store for us,—so dim and dark is the vista of our hopes and fears,—so beyond calculation the uncertain future.

This reflection leads me to hope that in dedicating this work to you, you will allow me to express my feelings of deep sympathy at the sad changes which have taken place since the period above alluded to. I know from the sentiments entertained by the press of England, and I may say of the world, that in thus expressing myself I embody also the feelings of the people of England, France, and America, at the lamentable disappearance of Sir John Franklin, and the mournful circumstances connected with the sad catastrophe; but it is some alleviation to your Ladyship's sorrow to know that the name of that noble and intrepid navigator will live for ever, to grace the brightest page in the history of our country.

I remain,

Dear Madam,

Yours very faithfully,

The Author.

London, December, 1854.

PREFACE.

If any one take up this work on the Druses of the Lebanon, in the expectation of meeting with profound speculations or original views, he will probably be disappointed. I have merely spoken of things as I have really seen them. I tell "straight on what I myself do know," and endeavour, in an easy and familiar manner, to lay before the reader a sketch of the character, manners, customs, history, and possessions of the Druses. If I am asked what could induce me to undertake the task of delineating a people so extraordinary—whose history has puzzled philosophers in all ages,—my simple reply is, that the task was an easy one to me, for Syria is the land of my birth, and my earliest boyhood has been passed among

her people : so that I have had facilities for my work which no mere traveller is ever likely to obtain. Being conversant with Arabic, and the different dialects spoken in the country, I have mingled freely among the mountain tribes, always upon terms of the greatest intimacy. I have partaken freely of their hospitality, not as a stranger but a friend. I have learnt to appreciate their Emirs and Akals by daily intercourse with them; and thus living among their people, their land my birth-place and the abode of my early youth, there has to me been a charm in pondering upon the history of this singular people; and with delight I have studied (for living among them as I did, how could I help doing so?) their character, and manners and customs. The result I present to my gentle reader, hoping that the fact of my intimacy with scenes and people I describe will induce him to feel more interest in perusing my work.

It will be seen that I have derived the materials of my rapid historical summary in some part from existing authors; but I have not trusted entirely to them—I have relied in a great degree upon oral communication with the people; for it must be remembered, that it is with them as with most pastoral and

primitive people, the wants of each successive generation are handed down from father to son, so that the living representatives of each passing age become the principal depositories of the facts of their previous history.

"Hört was die alten Hirten sich erzälen,"

is an invitation always coupled with authority, because we know that the relater, whatever may be his deficiencies, *intends* to tell the truth, and that is a great point gained. The historian is ordinarily too apt to let party spirit or private prejudice give a colour to his story, so that the past, instead of being faithfully painted, is but the reflex of the present; but the old man who sits down with you to tell you the old story which was told to him, feels bound simply to deliver the trust as faithfully as it was confided to him, and would not tell you if he thought you would not do the same.—"We have heard with our ears, and our fathers have declared unto us" must ever be the best guarantee for the trustworthiness of the narrator.

The interesting and extraordinary Creed which I append, I have taken every care to translate faithfully. It is to be found in an Arabic manuscript in my possession, which I obtained in the year 1851 with a great

deal of trouble, and after much bargaining, from a Maronite gentleman residing in the village of Hadded, on the Lebanon, who was engaged in initiating me into the mysteries of the Arabic language.

Should my work be acknowledged as not devoid of interest or instruction, I shall feel fully repaid for all my labour: the Reader's favor will be my best reward. In the hope that I shall obtain it,

I remain,

His humble servant,

THE AUTHOR.

LONDON, DECEMBER, 1854.

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THE DRUSES

OF

THE LEBANON.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION — LOCAL REMINISCENCES — BEAUTIFUL SCENERY — MORNING ON THE MOUNTAINS — NATURE'S INCENSE — CEDARS OF LEBANON—APPROACH TO SIDON—ANTIQUITY OF THE CITY — CLIMATE — THE MODERN TOWN — BEAUTIFUL CARVINGS — POPULATION AND TRADE — SIDON AS IT IS — BEYROUT — ITS PICTURESQUE POSITION—SUNRISE—MORNING SCENES—BATHERS AND BOATMEN—THE MORNING MEAL—BOUNTY OF NATURE.

"Ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on an hill."—ISAIAH xxx. 17.

BEFORE entering upon the theory and creed entertained by the Druses, and drawing our own conclusions therefrom, it will be most essential that the reader should be made acquainted (so far as it lies in our power to glean information on so exclusive a subject) with the past and present condition of the Druses, their supposed history, the country they inhabit, and the manners, customs, costumes, and employments

of this peculiar people or sect,—living as they do in the very heart of a country in all ages populated, and celebrated for centuries as the most beautiful and most fruitful district of a land flowing with milk and honey.

Who that is a Christian, and acquainted with the pages of Holy Writ, has not heard of Lebanon and her cedars? Almost every book in the Old Testament has some allusion to this spot; and many are the praises lavished upon the trees and the wines of Lebanon. To this day, this stately range of snow-crowned mountains remains the object of veneration to many sects inhabiting, and many creeds visiting, the shores of Palestine.

To the artist, the poet, the enthusiast in the picturesque and the beautiful, the shores of Palestine from Sidon to Beyrout are one inexhaustible chain of treasures—one extensive panorama of the most delicate and the most stately delineations of nature—a picture finished off and framed by that incomparable artist, the Great Workman whose word created the universe.

On a summer's morning the approach from sea to the shores between Sidon and Beyrout presents one of the most magnificent and inspiriting pictures ever looked upon by mortal man. The deep yet clear blue of the almost motionless sea that ripples gently against the sides of our bark, as, urged imperceptibly onwards by the breath of the morning breeze, she slips noiselessly over the placid waters, is gradually lighted up as the last ray of the morning star disappears beyond the

western horizon. Universal quiet reigns around, and, save the occasional plaintive creaking of the rigging of our boat, as ever and anon she rolls more deeply on the watery surface, there is not a sound to break the stillness, not a whisper to wake up nature from her drowsy lethargy. Gradually, however, the spirit of night gathers around her her dark blue mantle, steps away rapidly over earth and sea, till presently her shrinking form hovers only over the uttermost limits of the western horizon; she pauses but as for an instant to turn round and bless those whose drooping eyelids she has crowned with peaceful slumber, and to receive the benedictions of universal nature for the soft night dews which have revived the parched earth and invigorated the vegetable creation. The blushing rose of summer smiles forth her thanks in rich incense and beauty, and the hoary snow-capped peak of Lebanon crowns himself with the first golden rays of light, as night sinks to rest beyond the waves of the Mediterranean, and the brighter mantle of morn is cast upon the universe.

So Adam woke to pristine joys and hope,
As wakes the summer morn on Lebanon;
Each snow-capped hill, each pleasant grassy slope,
Clad in the glorious vesture of the morn.
How could the mind, sustained by such a sight,
Tremble at death, or ever dream of night,
Whilst nature all around—earth, moon-beams, sea, and sky—
Breathe hope of such-like joys eternally?
Courage! brave soldier of the Christian band!
One manful struggle, and the victory won—
One plunge, and we are landed on that land
Where smiles are planets—joys a radiant sun.

Gradually, as daylight gains strength, the misty vapours of morning and the exhalations of the low lands disperse and dissolve. The curtain of the scene has been rolled up and tied with the broad ribbons of glaring daylight.

Before us, revealed and developed, is the land promised to Abraham and his seed for ever. High mountains, with their snowy tops sparkling in the morning, mark a bold outline against the now intensely blue sky; and above these again, right overhead, is an azure firmament, a region of blue, bespangled with silvery and fleecy clouds which, in the vast space intervening between sea and firmament, look like a reservoir of wind and pleasant breezes, kept there against the wants of a sultry and parching summer, such as we are pretty sure to experience between the months of June and September.

It is with these mountains that we have now more particularly to do: the Druses dwell on their summits and in their valleys and dells. An isolated people, as far as regards faith and doctrines, and all those hopes and fears connected with that land imaginatively situated beyond yon spangled firmament, they are in truth "*a beacon upon the top of a mountain and as an ensign on an hill;*" but of this more anon.

We come back in thought to contemplate the mountains: and a vast field of contemplation do they afford.

Colour and shades are here seen to perfection; angle and peak and curve innumerable and unrivalled; as

yet the glory of the sun has not over-topped the higher range, nor pried inquisitively into the darker and shadier recesses of nook and dell.

So let it be; under the present aspect there is charming variety, as we suffer our eyes to travel eagerly over the gorgeous picture. We look with reverence and awe at the fathomless abyss intervening between heaven and earth, but we remember that even so great and infinitely greater is the mercy and compassion of the Great Beneficent.

With swelling heart and gratitude shining lustrously through our eyes, we sweep down towards heaven's footstool, and the snow-capped tops and clear blue sky have already elicited applause.

We look lower and lower again, and see a misty hazy atmosphere, in which are wonderfully blended the richest of rich purples with the deep orange fading into the lighter golden hue of the sun's rays.

That indicates the loftiest and most distant part of the Lebanon, where the outriders of Phœbus have already arrived, and are shaking into wakefulness the sweet wild woodbine, the jessamine, the rose, and other wild graces, who have been preparing incense as an early offering to the goddess of morning.

Still lower, and space leaps over yards and miles; in the valleys and dells that intervene, obscure mists yet sit enthroned till the greater heat of the day shall break up their sombre meetings and expel them from the fairer regions of the earth.

Here stately trees bow and wave with a rich erratic air, acknowledging the mild courtesy of the morning breeze as it sweeps pleasantly through their leafy boughs. Winter and summer, autumn and spring, there they have stood, the same old trees, whispering to each other in the silent night-breeze, or roaring out wildly when tempest rode by in his hurricane car—roaring out records of dark deeds often witnessed when worm-like men have contended for the usurpation of the fairer fields of Palestine, and when, not contented with deluging them with their own blood, they have carried fire and sword, pestilence and famine into the land.

The old trees bluster with wrath and indignation as they wail over the fate of a stately cedar of only ten centuries' growth, ruthlessly hewn down by some tyrant or oppressor. Behind these tall trees is a pleasant little village, and here also the "*ensign on an hill*" is to be found.

Still the eye sweeps downwards towards the earth; nearer and nearer, clearer and better defined, the treasures and the beauties of the earth reveal themselves to our gaze. Sometimes a dark space filled with sombre vapours, apparently a yard wide, yet occupying many a mile, floats like a misty sea between range and range of the Lebanon. Upon these oceans the only ships are the vulture, the eagle, and the hawk, which float lazily to and fro, guarding with the keen eyes of hunger the plains below.

Palpably bright, against dingy and obscure brown of

half-developed hill and half-dissolved vapours, stand forth in all the glory of vigorous health, the green mulberry plantations that overtop the lower grassy mounds and snow-white minarets. A pleasant hill, green and rising rapidly, crowned with an old convent's walls, occupies the centre of our picture; a dark, dark green bandage, overtopped with white houses and graceful feathery-leaved palms—a sea, girt with a pleasant sandy beach—an old bridge with broken arches, terminating in a battered tower—a few rocks spread with fishing nets—a boat or two rolling gently and listlessly on the calm serene waters—something white, and blue, and red, thronging along the beach.

The cords squeal through the greaseless blocks—the old yards heavily descend upon deck—the anchor, heavier still, splashes into the water,—a frightened sea-gull flies away to the other end of the bay—and—we have arrived at Sidon.

A small boat, not much bigger than a magnified cockle-shell, is launched from our felucca into the sea. The reis, or captain, leaves us, to get pratique, or permission to communicate with the shore. Most of the lazy sailors wrap themselves in their *meshlahs* and lie about listlessly upon the decks. You and I will wrap ourselves in that old garment called a brown study, and then—why, then we will endeavour to collect and compress together all that we have ever heard, or known, or read, about this said place Sidon, before we trip the anchor again and proceed on to Beyrout.

In 1289 the last act of barbarity towards unoffending Sidon was perpetrated by the Egyptian Mamelukes under the order of the then Sultan of Egypt, who, to the end that it might no more afford a shelter to or be a favourite resort of Christians, caused Sidon to be destroyed; and the pretty gardens and dwelling-houses were laid waste by the hands of the ruthless Egyptian soldiers, or razed to the ground with fire. Few cities lay claim to greater antiquity than Sidon: it is supposed to have been founded by Sidon, the eldest son of Canaan; and, if this be the case, it is now nigh upon four thousand years old. A Phœnician colony afterwards existed at Sidon; and after the subversion of the Greek empire, Sidon fell into the hands of the Romans, who deprived it of its freedom, to punish the citizens for their frequent revolts.

From this date Sidon fell successively under the Saracen, Seljukian, Turkish, and Egyptian Sultans, till at the date above recorded, five hundred and sixty-five years ago, the last act of spoliation was committed; and in 1841 Sidon, in common with Syria and Palestine, again fell under the sway of the Ottoman empire, after having been ruled by Ibraham Pasha for a few brief years.

An occasional tall palm, waving its graceful branches to and fro, gives evidence that we have here a warmer climate than Laodicea or Antioch; whilst the handsome banana, with its rich cluster of golden fruit, bespeaks a mildness and peculiar adaptation of soil for

this rare exotic which is wholly unknown elsewhere in Cilicia, Syria, and Palestine.

At intervals, peeping through and over the surrounding foliage, we are favoured with glimpses of the neatly whitewashed summer-houses, the retreats of the more opulent native families during the summer months; and in one open grass plot, fenced in with green railings, a remarkable object from the sea, is the handsome tomb erected to the memory of some great Moslem fanatic who lived and died here scores of years gone by. Horsemen in gaily-coloured overcoats are galloping about on the sands; weary foot passengers, with heavy laden mules or donkeys, plod along on their way; children are sporting with the waves, or running in reckless pursuit of fugitive crabs: while groups of women, clad from head to foot in snow-white *izars*, with closely veiled faces, are congregated under some favourite tree or near some favourite well, discussing the news of the day.

All this, in the hot sunshine, looks gay and enlivening; but what adds much to the beauty of the prospect is, that beyond all this amalgamation of animal life, nature has framed this enchanting picture with the lofty and interminable range of Lebanon mountains—dark and sombre-colored down below, gradually verging into brighter hues as they rise, and terminating in perpetually snow-capped peaks. Above these are a few drapery clouds, and then the wide blue canopy of heaven.

Directly opposite to us is the modern town of Sidon —if a place can be called modern, parts of whose walls and fortifications have been standing through centuries—a not only respectable but really substantial and pretty-looking town. Some two hundred yards from the anchorage is an insulated castle, now in ruins, which was, it was said, greatly damaged by the shots from the British ships of war in the last expedition. This castle communicated with a fortress on the shore by means of a permanent bridge, crossing over the sea, and sustained upon twelve or fifteen really handsome arches; portions of this bridge have also gone to decay. Beyond this is the landing-place, and the town itself. The town is built partly upon a hill, which was once well fortified, and whose summit is crowned with a castle now used as a monastery. To the left of the town the steep cliffs gradually increase in height till they abruptly terminate in a headland, beyond which nothing but a vast extent of ocean meets the eye.

Having indulged in this survey from the ship, let us land.

The gates of the cities in Palestine are still the favourite resort of the elders. Especially is this the case at Sidon, where one or two very superior cafés line the entrance, and invite the weary and hot to repose and refresh themselves. We land on a rather dangerous and slippery flight of steps, up which, however, with the assistance of our native boatmen, we

successfully scramble. The streets of Sidon are like the streets of all Oriental towns, but the strange practice exists of causing the terraces of the upper stories of houses to extend across the street, supported on frequent substantial arches, which at the same time that they effectually exclude the heat and rain, also exclude the light, rendering it irksome and disagreeable in the extreme for uninitiated strangers to traverse the town from one quarter to another. Emerging from one of these tunnelled thoroughfares, we find ourselves unexpectedly opposite the massive and handsome gateway leading into the French khan, which was originally a large caravansary for the accommodation of travellers and their beasts of burthen, but which, having fallen into the hands of the French government, has been converted partly into a consular residence, partly to afford a school house, and partly an asylum to French or destitute travellers and pilgrims. Within the large square enclosed by the walls of this caravansary, that delicious tropical fruit the banana flourishes in the greatest luxuriance. The buildings, which are of great antiquity, look as solid and firm as though in their pristine condition, and the exquisitely carved beams that support the tottering roofs of many of the oldest ruins and mosques, give ample testimony to the skill and aptness of the Sidonian carver in ages gone by. "*There is not amongst us any that can skill to hew timber like the Sidonians.*" (1 Kings v. 6.) Such was the tribute rendered to the natives by the wise

King Solomon. The interiors of the houses at Sidon are cleanly, and the inhabitants extremely hospitable.

Sidon is now computed to contain upwards of twelve thousand inhabitants, two-thirds of whom are Mahometans, the rest Christians and Jews; the Christians being by far the most numerous of the two. They still continue to be a very industrial people, excelling in the manufacture of silk scarfs and gaily-ornamented *boshias*, a species of wide handkerchief bound round the caps of the men, partly to protect their heads from the sun, and partly for ornament's sake. The trade and commerce of Sidon is limited, though affording a vast field for speculative industry. Besides a considerable quantity of silk grown in the district, Sidon has of late years contributed much grain to European markets. The anchorage is not very secure for shipping of a large tonnage; nevertheless natural facilities exist for creating an excellent and secure harbour, the long ledges of rocks which run parallel with the town affording a very good base work upon which to found and carry out a bulwark against the winds and waves of the winter months. Fruit and vegetables are abundant and cheap. As we pass along the thickly-planted hedges we observe the market gardeners busily culling these, and packing them for exportation to Beyrout and other parts of the sea-coast. Vast quantities of timber hewn in Lebanon are brought to Sidon, partly on the backs of camels—partly trained

down by yokes of oxen. Climbing up the old monastery which crowns the central hill and overtops the surrounding country, we obtain a fine view of the bay, the town, and the shipping. The sea lies calmly refulgent in the daylight. The cool afternoon breeze sweeps by on its refreshing errand to the sun-parched cliffs of lower Lebanon. Seated on rough stones we quench our thirst from the cold pure waters of a purling stream, and then we are lost in reverie. This is that Sidon whose workmen helped to erect that temple which was the glory of its age. Over the very ground on which we are seated doubtless timber in abundance has passed on its way from the mountains to the fleet ready to convey it hence to Joppa. The mountains are the same—the plain is the same—the ocean the same—the dew of the night and the pleasant breeze of the evening—these are the same as of yore; only the workmanship of man has decayed. Everything in nature remains as in the city's most triumphant days. Thousands of dead men mingle with the dust below; their places only remain vacant and unreplenished. The wild flowers and the fruit, the stately tree and the bush, these are as plentiful and luxuriant as ever.

Such is the Sidon of to-day, and if we had followed the course of the breeze till it reached the summit of the hills—blowing on shore from seaward—we should have pretty well defined the limits or imaginary bounds of the habitation of the Druses to

the south-west and westward; hence they extend as far north as the Nahr-el-Kelb in Beyrout, and making a circuit inland and over the hills, their villages are all compressed into that space occupied between the respective latitudes of Beyrout and Sidon, confined within one solitary parallel of longitude.

These two cities may be said to be the sea-port towns of the country of the Druses—those people of the Lebanon, whose peculiar specialities have severed them from familiar intercourse with the several other nations surrounding them, and in many instances conjointly constituting the population of some of their towns and villages.

Before entering upon the field of research, or ascending the precipitous sides of the Lebanon, we may as well coast on, and visit first that other great emporium of Syrian commerce, Beyrout, through whose trade with Europe and the Levant, the Druses avail themselves of opportunities for their labour and industry, and find a ready market for the harvests and fruits they reap from their various avocations and callings.

I know no part of the world that I have visited, heard described, read of, or seen in pictures, which could outrival or surpass the appearance of modern Beyrout, from the anchorage, or from the approach to the harbour. Even twenty years ago it was reputed as occupying a remarkably picturesque position, for nature had been lavish in her gifts, and the hills

were fertile and clothed all the year round in spring vesture.

The sublime beauties of nature have been even further developed—rendered still more striking and beautiful by the assistance of art. Cosmopolites have transferred their homes and families from all parts of Europe, and even from distant America, bringing with them that peculiar love of comfort, ease, and elegance, so peculiarly typical of European nations. As they chose upon both a cheap and healthy spot for the site of their future homes, they had ample means for gratifying their varied tastes and hobbies, the result of all which has been the speedy and almost magical transformation of an almost deserted village into a populated and thickly-set town, interspersed with the most delightful villas and gardens. Land was cheap, provisions cheap, the soil fertile, the country productive, and the immigrants men who could afford to speculate, and bide their time for reaping a result. The upshot of all which has been, the modern town of Beyrout—the Paris of Syria—the Delhi of commerce—the emporium of all the trade with the shores of Syria, Palestine, and Cilicia.

I was born at Beyrout, and therefore my vanity in lauding the city of my birth may, I hope, be a pardonable offence. Even St. Paul called his native place, Tarsus, a city of no mean repute. No doubt Tarsus was then-a-days a place of considerable importance, but in the present century it would not

stand comparison in any one respect with Beyrout; the former has barely any commerce, but few Europeans, and possesses, next to Scanderoon, the worst reputation for fever and other pernicious maladies. Besides all this, English travellers have over and over again sustained my encomiums upon Beyrout, strengthening the link of my affections for that spot; consequently I feel more at ease in dwelling for a brief period upon its surpassing charms of scenery; the more especially as it is here that we shall first encounter, whilst strolling through the bazaar, specimens, male and female, of that bold and solitary people that are like a beacon upon the mountain-tops of Lebanon.

My father's mansion occupies a prominent position protruding into the sea, and towering high over steps leading to the quay or landing-place. Standing on this quay early on a summer's morning, the scenery is magnificent. To watch the sun rise from behind the snowy tops of Anti-Libanus, whilst the whole earth, the grass, the bushes, and the tree-tops glitter and sparkle radiantly with dew-drops, as though nature had unlocked a casket of brilliants and held them up for Phœbus to envy,—this is delightful; and added to this, the balmy breath of morning and the cool ripplings of the Mediterranean invite the mind to quiet and repose, and tune up the lute of the muses. No sooner, however, does the fiery red face of the sun protrude itself over the mulberry plantations, than the Turkish frigates in the harbour fire off their

morning guns and hoist up their pennants. The white smoke curls palpably against the clear blue sky, and so speedily evaporates; and with that smoke is dissipated the romance and quiet of early morning. The reality of heat and dust, busy turmoil and strife, now speedily wake up for the day; the already scorching rays of the sun warn the European to seek shelter within the temporary coffee-houses that line the beach side, where, readily supplied with narghilès and coffee, and inhaling with additional gusto the fresh breezes of morning, he contemplates nature and the picture of every-day life in Beyrout.

Fifty hot men, who have been woke up in a hurry, and seem to have been turned out all of a heap with vestiges of yesterday's occupation carefully pasted over in a coating of sand and wheat dust, rush by us and plunge hastily into the cool waters of the sea. These are mostly sifters employed at the various warehouses, who live in a perpetual state of perspiration and powder, the earliest to work, the latest to bed, and whose solitary enjoyment of life seems to be this half hour's swim in the sea. Plunging and kicking and snorting like grampuses, no place but a school or a bedlam could rival such a picture of riotous mirth and enjoyment. Their half hour terminated, however, they emerge from the water purified and cooled. An hour hence, in the centre of the corn bazar, they may be encountered, one and all, hopelessly dusty and hot. After these bathers, early boatmen make their appear-

ance, and loosing their respective barks, paddle out into the ocean. Some go a-fishing, some are employed to carry off the daily supplies requisite for the sturdy and hard-working crews of the various vessels in harbour, others ply for fares to and fro from the shore; but the proper time to witness the activity of these boatmen to perfection is when the bi-monthly mail packets and steamers arrive off Beyrout. Then indeed they reap a plentiful harvest, from landing or embarking passengers whom they invariably expose to the most extortionate charges.

Next to the boatmen come the early vendors of sweet stuffs, who recommend their commodities to the attention of all by a species of chant not unlike the too-ral-loo-ral chorus of an English comic song. About this time European shops begin to open, and merchants' offices are being swept out and sprinkled with water; the heavy portals of the large French café, near the landing-place, swing heavily upon their hinges, and reveal the portly proprietor with polished head and face, smoking an early cigar, and touting for victims. Monsieur has a very small humble oily voice, with which he breathes a universal *bonjour;* but his conscience is even smaller than his voice, so small that many of his intimate friends have suggested that oftentimes he has left it behind him in the pocket of a cast-off waistcoat. Be this as it may, his appearance is the signal for breakfast anywhere where that commodity can be obtained.

The next half hour is a blank to the activity of the day, a check to the tidal stream of commerce, during which brief interval, lord and labourer, master and brute, are busy masticating, stringing up nerve and strength to resist the burthen and the heat of the day. Cold meat and wines, coffee and chocolate, tea, bread, and buscuits, cakes, curdled cream, fruit and preserves, these constitute the early meal of the opulent. The labouring class and the poorer are equally relishing their cucumbers and garlic and onions, with a cold platter of *burghol* from yesterday, and the additional relish of a potful of *yohurt* and a basket or so of fresh apricots. Hadji 'Brahim, however, who has no money and no friends, and who has been thrown out of work for the last six weeks by intermittent fever, finds it difficult, even in a country so proverbially cheap as Syria, to get the wherewithal to satisfy the cravings of nature. But a kind friend lends him the services of a donkey for an hour or so in the morning. Flinging himself upon the donkey's back, our Hadji scampers off to the environs of Beyrout. Here cactuses flourish in the wildest abundance and profusion, and here, whilst his donkey is quietly browsing upon thistles, the Hadji breakfasts sumptuously off prickly pear fruit. Nor is this all: when he has satisfied the cravings of nature, and stooped to quench thirst from the purling stream close by, he collects a sufficiency in panniers and baskets for the supply of the principal markets, from whence an easy revenue is derived, which immediately

alleviates all simple wants. Thus bountiful is nature in the rich gifts scattered round, thus prolific and fruitful the earth, in a region which thousands of years ago was emphatically described as "a land of brooks of water, fountains, and depths that spring out of valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley, and vines, and fig trees and pomegranates; a land of oil, olive, and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness." (Deut. viii.)

CHAPTER II.

BUSINESS ACTIVITY — PANORAMA OF COSTUMES — NATIVES AND FOREIGNERS—A DAUGHTER OF THE DRUSES—ENGLISH MILORDS —RAMBLES THROUGH THE STREETS—BAZAARS AND SHOPS— SOUVENIRS OF SYRIA — THE HAMMAM — THE FASHIONABLE PROMENADE—THE CLOSE OF THE DAY.

> 'Tis pleasant, through the loop holes of retreat,
> To peep at such a world; to see the stir
> Of the great Babel, and not feel the crowd.
>
> COWPER.

By ten o'clock every man is at his post again, and the business of the day may be said to have fairly commenced. European merchants, from their houses in the outskirts, make their appearance, followed by faithful native *seraffs*, conversing the while on the profit and loss of yesterday's speculation, and uttering significant hopes as to the realization of those now in hand. The din and the turmoil of business sweeps up and down the streets and over house-tops like a noisy human hurricane; muscular porters, tottering under the weight of ponderous iron bars and bales of Manchester goods, scream out notes of warning to those who impede their progress; the startling cry, "*dahrak!*" (or,

your back!) imparts amazing agility to the most dignified strut or the most corpulent bearing; speedily the passengers make room for the burthened, and the goods are swallowed up in the dark recesses of vast warehouses, only to make room for a fresh shoal of groaning porters.

Meanwhile, in the most central thoroughfare, and where the densest crowds are congregated, open corn markets are held; clouds of dust half obscure the hot labourers measuring out the wheat; a troop of donkeys gallop over the edges of the corn factor's treasures; a long string of camels stalk majestically through the crowd, and they have barely disappeared before the public auctioneer takes up his position for the day under the shadow of a public fountain; idlers and purchasers quickly cluster around him, piece after piece of calico or gaily-coloured prints is unrolled and systematically flung over the heads of the spectators, so as to display without many words or comments the length and breadth, colour and quality of the stuff about to be sold. "Harag! harag!" screams out the auctioneer; twenty different voices commence the bidding for the day; rapidly, but by small fractions, the purchase money rises, till at length the auctioneer has realized the sum he had predetermined; twenty minutes, and his stock of goods has all been rapidly disposed of; the heated multitude flock round an itinerant vendor of sûs or liquorice water, as that individual, in all the dignity of office, loudly tinkles

his brass drinking cups together to attract attention to his commodities.

Besides the sûs-vendor, there are many others who claim and divide the attention of the thirsty multitude; for the wealthier portion there is the *bouz*, or perambulating ice-cream manufacturer, who sells his small cups of delicate and refreshing mixture for ten or twenty paras; but the really thirsty labourer who has been up to his elbows in grain, and whose eyes, mouth, and nostrils bear testimony to the overwhelming dust, can seldom afford to indulge in either of the foregoing luxuries. Notwithstanding this, his thirst is equally if not better slaked by a hearty draught of pure spring water, such as is sold by yonder group of raggamuffin boys, those whose whole stock in trade consists of an earthen *burdhac*, a vessel with a spout like a coffee-pot. But as many thirsty souls drink from the same vessel, it would be unpalatable were all to apply their mouths to the same spout; to avoid this the peasant resorts to the not very elegant and decidedly difficult operation of pouring the water into his mouth by holding the spout high over his head, and so catching the stream as it falls. But what shall we say as regards the variegated costumes and appearance of those who constitute the crowd around us? these are indeed a perfect panorama in themselves. I have not much to say about the peasants and the labourers and the poorer class; their costume is scant, their wardrobe constituted of a bundle of

divers-coloured rags; but the more striking and palpable, as in comparison with these, appear the ship-masters, the sailors, the tradesmen, the merchants, and the travellers of all four corners of the world, who are here congregated for the prosecution of their respective pursuits.

In snow-white loose trowsers and blue silk jacket, with unexceptionable red cap and slippers, a costly shawl girdle, and a jaunty air, the spruce Greek captain brushes by the more sedate and the more soberly-clad Armenian banker, whose wide black turban and loose grey robes are but poor indications of the immense wealth at his command. But though strangers might be misled by this, not so the experienced eye of yonder harping Hebrew, whose emaciated features and untrimmed beard are in strict accordance with his careless and filthy attire, and the sordid avarice that reigns within.

But the Jew gives place to a group of boisterous sailors who, set on shore for a day's liberty, are rollicking through the streets in shirts with blue facings and stout duck trowsers, uncertain as to when and where they are to have their day's carousal. Closely-hooded friars, with cunning peeping from under their hoods, glide smoothly and noiselessly like serpents among the living mass. The spruce Aleppine beau, the sprucer Beyrout gallant, saunter into the bazaars in search of listless amusement; busy-looking European merchants, in wide-brimmed straw hats, are

conversing earnestly with natives and brokers relative to commercial transactions; ship captains of a dozen different nations, followed by sailors and boys laden with fruits and provisions, are hastening towards marina, whilst with less ceremony and about as much civility as a bear, the dissipated Turkish soldier elbows his way through the multitude, his costume a perfect caricature upon the discipline of the army. Meanwhile, like angels flitting to and fro amongst the troubled spirits of the earth, are women of all nations and creeds, from the fair western belle, clad in the height of Parisian fashion, with parasol and bonnet *à la mode*, to the equally beautiful though darker sylph from Damascus, who, closely enveloped in her thick white veil, yet displays sufficient beauty peeping forth from her loveable eyes to convince one of the fact that the sweetest kernels are sometimes concealed within a rough and unsightly husk. But amongst these, only distinguishable in the streets from the greater accumulation of dust upon her white *izar*, and adhering to her yellow boots, we recognise the daughter of a Druse of the Lebanon; and if testimony of this fact be wanting, we have it in her mother, who follows closely and jealously upon her footsteps, bearing on her head the emblem of her people, the shorter and peculiar horn worn by the Druse females.

Now a group of English travellers in Newmarket costume attract the attention of all and incite the

admiration of countless urchins; the knee-breeches and top-boots, the shooting-coats and white felt hat, surmounted by gaily-coloured boshea; these, in addition to the sun-burnt and inflamed countenances, at once indicate them as the roving sons of Great Britain, the *milords* of the Levant,—those fabulous individuals who in the estimation of most Orientals are supposed to be possessed of countless wealth, and who consequently ought and are expected to pay a hundredfold for every item they purchase. Their proverbial liberality is the endless theme of the *Tourgiman* or dragoman, the day-dream of a native merchant's hopes and speculations, and many are the invitations held out to these strangers to repose awhile and smoke a friendly pipe by the crafty shopkeepers, who hope to victimise their purses. But whilst these gentlemen, in the full enjoyment of the novelty that surrounds them, swagger contentedly through the bazaars, we pursue our peaceful investigation.

Here comes one who, by the singularity of his costume, we recognise at once as being a Druse—one of those people of the Lebanon, whose theory and creed have so long puzzled the inquisitive. Although the weather is intensely hot, he persists in wearing his gaily-striped *abaya*, a garment almost too heavy for the severest day in winter; his trowsers are of the ordinary blue twill worn by the peasantry, but in addition to his *tarboosh*, he wears the *laffé*, a small turban peculiar to the Druses, differing from those

worn by the Turks in size and mode of donning it, and whose prevailing colour is usually a bright red. Abou Shein, for so is this Druse called, is an old acquaintance, with whom we have been long on familiar terms of intimacy; he stops to greet us as we pass, and before parting prevails upon us to accept his invitation to accompany him on a tour amongst the Druse villages on the Lebanon; to-morrow we start on our tour, meanwhile we may ramble over Beyrout, and see what remains to be seen, during so brief a sojourn.

Leaving the spot where the auctioneer was lately clamorous and busy, we turn our backs upon the sea, and go straight up the *Souk-il-Heddèdeen*, or the street of ironsmiths. Here, as might be expected from the name, there is not much to excite admiration, or invite attention; first we pass a small shop, great, however, in fame amongst the Beyrouteens, as the repository of the best *k'dames* sold in the place. K'dames are a species of split peas, baked and sold hot; no muleteer or donkey-driver or camel-driver would ever think of starting on a journey without a good pocketful of these to munch *en route;* no small boy, however ragged, but will lay out his whole capital of paras in these k'dames; hence the vendor derives no small profit, and is driving a thriving trade. Further on we are all in obscurity; streets are vaulted, and on either side noisy and indefatigable blacksmiths are pursuing their hot trade. As might be expected,

the noise and din created by them is immense; sparks fly in all directions, occasionally burning large holes in the loose white robes of the *élites;* here, also, are countless detachments of miserable and half-starved curs, watching, with famished looks, the proceedings of the meat vendors at the further end of the street, so that upon the whole we are glad to escape from such a combination of evils, even though the change be rather dubious, for we have now entered upon the vegetable and fish bazaar; to the right runs the latter, to the left the former.

Crossing over a little to the right, we enter upon a main street where tobacco is the principal ingredient exposed for sale, but to the right-hand side is a noted ice-house, where sherbets and ices are made to perfection ; a huge block of snow, stuck on an iron pole, answers as the sign-board, and here, pausing, we watch a thirsty traveller partake of a glass of sherbet ; the method of preparing which is not exactly in accordance with European ideas of cleanliness. Ranged upon shelves within the shop are prepared bottles of various refreshing mixtures; one contains lemon juice, another the juice of mulberries, a third an extract from raisins, and so on, the whole being duly seasoned with sugar. When a customer calls for a draught he makes his choice and pays his money, the shopkeeper then scrapes flakes of snow into the glass, compressing the same with the palm of his hand, over this he pours the sherbet, and the whole mixture constitutes the drink.

Just opposite, having slaked his thirst, the traveller finds ample resources wherewith to comfort the inner man. Hereabouts is one of the best cookshops in Beyrout, making a goodly display of various Oriental dishes, such as broths, pilaufs, kubbés, sausages made of minced meat and rice, mouhshés, and various vegetable and meat entrées.

A narrow and indifferent street leads into the most respectable commercial square, in the centre of which is a fountain. It is covered in with coarse matting to exclude rain and heat; here, seated tailor fashion, are some of the most opulent tradesmen of the city; the goods they sell are chiefly prints, madapolams, shirtings, chintzes, etc. Interspersed with these shops are the vendors of sherbet and coffee. To our left is a long street exclusively occupied by shoemakers; but leaving these we proceed up a street to the right, leading into a smaller square, with more tradesmen, who have more European commodities for sale. The narrow street before us has most charms for the stranger whose purse strings are loosened for the purchase of souvenirs of Syria; here we find tarbooshes of all qualities and prices, elegantly embroidered tobacco pouches, and those peculiarly beautiful stuffs, exclusively of Damascus manufacture, which are made up into caps, slippers, and reticules, and as such sold at exorbitant prices to strangers who wish to add to the elegance of a déshabille at home.

Entering a large gateway on our right, where a solitary soldier mounts guard, we find ourselves in an extensive square, or khan, the upper buildings of which are arched and occupied as a military barrack, whilst the lower compartments are let out as shops. Coming out again, we pursue our way up the already-mentioned street, taking the first turning to our right, when persevering through a number of narrow alleys we finally emerge into a decent thoroughfare, whose distinguishing mark is a large Hammam, or Turkish vapour bath, through the railed windows of which we make note *en passant* of a motley assemblage of bathers in the various stages of *kef;* some have already bathed, and enveloped in manifold sheets are lolling at their ease on the divans, smoking narghilès and drinking coffee; others are only just preparing to undergo the ordeal. Leaving the bath and turning sharp to the right, we enter upon the most notable street in Beyrout; here, on either side, are lofty houses and several European shops, respectively the property of Italians, Greeks, Ionians, Maltese, etc., whilst further on are the mansions of some of the European merchants; beyond these again, a grand resort of idlers, is an open café, shaded in with mats, and liberally besprinkled with little stools, narghilès, pipes, and all other requisites of Oriental kef. From this place, turning to our left, the road leads us to the gate which opens upon Ras Beyrout, and as by this time the whole day has been consumed in our

rambles, the hour of fashionable promenade has arrived; ladies and gentlemen, whose attire would grace Regent Street or the Boulevards, here assemble for air and exercise.

The first object which attracts attention is the new European theatre, a perfect novelty and great source of amusement to the inhabitants. Walking along the cliffs and watching the gambols of the waves, we encounter numerous groups, some seated on chairs, others promenading, others again showing off their skill in horsemanship. At some distance is a noted coffee house, opposite to which are some building slips from which of late years several fine vessels have been launched; here knots of mercantile men congregate, smoke and sip coffee, and converse exclusively of commercial affairs.

Antiquity hunters and the curious find food for inquiry and amusement in the ruins a little further on, where the remnants of an amphitheatre jut out into the sea; and opposite to it on the high road is some mosaic work, the remnant of bygone ages. Beyond these is the dilapidated monument raised originally to commemorate the untimely end of an officer and some of the crew of a British man-of-war, whose boat was upset in the surf. The promenade extends about a mile further, but we pause here because the hour is growing late. Before us rolls in stately grandeur the mighty Mediterranean, murmuring as it laves the rocky beach a requiem, to the past glory and faded greatness

of the promised land. The sun has dipped his fiery orb in the blue bosom of the ocean, and the white sails of countless small boats float upon the surface of the deep; all the variegated hues of the rainbow are blended in the summer sky, and the land breeze is laden with twenty perfumes from the mountains.

As we reach the point whence we started in the morning the day is rapidly closing in; toil-worn labourers, fagged and dusty and hot, plod their weary way to their miserable homes, where hunger pours incense upon their frugal meals, and Morpheus seals their eyelids with refreshing slumber; the last boat-load of tired sailors, who have toiled through the oppressive heat of the day, has landed the last batch of merchandise, and is returning to their floating home, which looms hazily in the distance. Quiet and silence assist night in spreading her mantle over the town, bright stars peep out from the firmament, the languid moon steals over the distant cape, the cafés are all illuminated, lights shine forth from the abodes of the wealthy, the weary are at rest, the wealthy and the civilised in the pursuit of domestic and social enjoyment.

CHAPTER III.

NIGHT SCENE—"ALL'S WELL!"—THE MUEDDEN CALL—MORNING AT A KHAN—NAHR BEYROUT—A MARONITE VILLAGE—THE ASCENT OF MAROCCOS—LIME-PITS AT BÊT-MIRIH—THE USUAL RENDEZVOUS—NATIVE THRESHING FLOORS.

> Thou spirit of the spangled night!
> I woo thee from the watch-tower high,
> Where thou dost sit to guide the bark
> Of lonely mariner.
>
> H. K. White.

In the summer months it is much the practice to sleep upon the terraces at Beyrout; the nights are so exceedingly close, and mosquitos so troublesome, that it is the only chance of getting a few hours' refreshing sleep. Sometimes the night dew is exceedingly heavy, but this is guarded against by temporary canopies or tents being erected on the terraces. Here, then, we are supposed to have been reposing after the fatigues of yesterday, and to brace us up for tomorrow's exertions, when shortly after midnight we are awakened from the profoundest sleep by the cry of

"*Tamrié*," which cry proceeds from the vendor of a species of cake whose component parts are flour, yeast, butter, and dibs, the latter being a saccharine ingredient extracted from the grape. The oft-repeated and startling cries of this vendor effectually drive away sleep from our eyelids; so to revenge ourselves upon this nocturnal miscreant we purchase specimens of his goods, and then and there devour them, returning a verdict to the effect that they are capital. For some unknown motive this tamrié is never to be bought or sold excepting from after midnight till sunrise, when, all hot and smoking, it is eagerly sought after by the greater mass of Beyrouteens.

Thoroughly awakened, yet lolling in our beds, we command an extensive and magnificent panorama from our elevated position; the silvery moon glides listlessly through the pale and cloudless skies, her light so brilliant that the smallest objects are distinguishable; the breeze has gradually died away in the west, and the waves that it chased wildly upon the beach have sunk into perfect repose. No mirror could reflect more clearly or present more placid a surface than the vast sheet of water beneath us. Like dark shadows upon the ocean, the distant ships gently rolling to and fro rock their inmates in slumber; inland, the silvery tops of the loftier trees and minarets define the upper outlines of the town; beyond these again, a dark confused mass, rise the distant mountains, till gradually, shade by shade lighter, they verge imperceptibly into the

azure tint of the canopy above them. All nature is hushed into the intensest repose, and not a breath of air is stirring. By and by the heavy footstep of the patrol echoes through the solitary and deserted streets of the town, waking up the watchful curs, who hail their advent with discordant yellings mingled with gruff loud barking ; the old watchmen who hover about the magazines and warehouses, wake up from fitful naps into energetic activity; snatches of songs, mixed with coughs and imprecations, warn the evil-doers that their plans and intentions are frustrated ; whilst like solitary owls hooting from their deserted ruins, the coast-guards, at interval of every hour, shout out an "All's well!" from the various steps and landing places, and having done this fall fast asleep again, till habit warns them that the hour has come round again. Sometimes a drunken Greek, unable to reach home, but who is still possessed of vague and languid notions of hilarity, chants the melancholy burden of some Athenian love song, and then drops off into troubled sleep again.

By and by the moon-capped branches of the distant cypresses are blended with dark shadows as they wave gently to and fro. This is an indication of the approach of the land breeze, which, laden with early incense, sweeps rapidly and moaningly over the town, rustling the leaves in its onward flight, and as it gains in strength, wailing dolefully through the crevices and windows of the old ruined castle in the sea. The wary Arab reis in the felucca anchored close to the castle,

who has been watching anxiously for the advent of this breeze, now wakes up his slumbering crew, and summons them to weigh the anchor. But it is no easy job to arouse such slumberers; loudly he bawls and strenuously he shakes them before the sleepers can be convinced of the reality of their position; then heavy shadows creep lazily along the white decks of the boats, a slight splashing of water ensues as they go through their early ablutions, the more thoroughly to waken their dormant faculties; soon echoes reply to the cheerful song of the mariners as they lend a hand to hoist up the ponderous wooden anchor; like a startled bird frightened from its nest, the wings of the little boat suddenly expand to the morning breeze, and the felucca suddenly takes flight across the expansive bosom of the ocean; ten minutes more, and an indistinct speck on the horizon assures us how well the boat has sped on her voyage.

A short interval of intensest silence; then suddenly there rises and sweeps over the town the wild but musical muedden song from all the lofty minarets, waking devout Turks to a sense of duty, and warning them that prayer is better than sleep; the last "Allah Akbar" revibrates gently and softly in the most distant echo; falling stars, like beautiful meteors, shoot forth from the skies as though tired of watching so long for Aurora; gradually the bright morning planet sets beyond the horizon; the stars in the eastern hemisphere fade rapidly before the bright rays of morning;

the moon has set; the snows of Anti-Lebanon are tipped with gold and roseate hues, and the first light of dawn appears in the east. Starting from our couches, refreshed and invigorated by the balmy breath of morning, we involuntarily are forced to exclaim, with the romantic Barbiere,—

> Ecco ridente il cielo,
> Gia spunta la bella aurora . .
> . . . E puoi dormir cosi ?

Having quoted from one romantic barber, we resort to an Oriental reality, who even at this early hour has opened the shutters of his shop, and is flourishing his razor over the tufted but otherwise bald head of a Turkish labourer, who has just submitted to the operation of being shaved. Hence we proceed to the Hammam, where the purifying process thoroughly awakes and invigorates us for the day; this is succeeded by an early cup of coffee and may-be a pipe; then, shouldering our saddle-bags, we hie away to the khan, where our friend the Druse has proposed to meet us, and here taking horse, we start upon our tour.

At this early hour only the inmates of the khan, who are mostly travellers, are awake and bustling about; camels in the act of being loaded, grumble discordantly at their burthens; vicious mules are kicking and scrambling for their early corn; horses are neighing, cocks crowing, and numberless dogs barking; but it is only here that this confusion and turmoil exists;

the rest of the town is yet wrapped in slumber. The iron-shod hoofs of our horses echo through the deserted streets as we pass through them, and finally emerge by the Bouebat-il-Sarayat, or Palace Gate, into an open sandy plain. Here activity already prevails; the military are being mustered preparatory to their morning drill; squealing fifes, horrible trumpets, and discordant drums give evidence of the ineffectual efforts of novices in military music. Leaving all these behind us, we skirt along the prickly pear hedges which yesterday afforded our friend 'Brahim a sumptuous breakfast; by and by, after an hour's ride, and as we approach the Nahr Beyrout, we begin to encounter early market gardeners who are bringing vegetables and fruit from the outskirts and neighbouring villages for the daily supply of the town; most of these trudge along on foot, carrying their boots over their shoulders, lest these costly and gay articles should be worn out by frequent journeys. Each individual pauses to salute us as we pass with the usual *Salaam aleikum;* and we as punctually reply, *Aleikum il salaam*, for of a truth the natives are naturally polite.

We now reach the bridge constructed across the river, and here, at this early hour of day, the scenery that surrounds us is both invigorating and inspiring; even our friend the Druse, who, like the rest of his brethren, has very great veneration for the works of creation, pauses to admire the scene. Beneath us, the limpid stream speeds merrily on its course towards the ocean;

its banks overhung with thick brushwood and stately trees, whence the early carol of numberless feathered songsters gives animation to the scene; water-fowl dart out ever and anon from their thick marshy recesses, and as speedily retire on perceiving that they are watched; here and there a solitary palm tree rises majestically and waves its graceful leaves in the early sunlight: the sudden report of fire-arms gives evidence of the activity of the European sportsmen, and turning round on our saddles, we catch an indistinct glimpse of their distant white hats and shooting jackets as they scramble through bushes and briars, followed by faithful pointers, in pursuit of wounded game. Above us, flocks of wild ducks, flying with military precision in columns of four or eight, sweep rapidly inland in search of some secluded spot where they may be safe from the devastating hand of man. Some of these flights are so extensive as to be estimated at upwards of a mile in length. Fire in amongst them, and their ranks are immediately broken, they disperse to the four quarters of the heavens, only, however, to re-unite again after a few minutes' separation.

Crossing the bridge we ride along, and finally enter upon groves of pine trees. In an open space to the right is situated a miserable little Maronite village, with a poorly-endowed Christian church. Some yards in front of this church stands a solitary mulberry tree, from a branch of which is pendant a plate of iron, on which the grey-bearded old priest is hammering away

with all might and good-will; this answers the purpose of a bell, and the booming sound summonses the scant congregation to early matins. After passing the village of Tunquané, which has nothing to commend it to our attention, and stopping at a spring where horses and men drink heartily, we commence the tedious and dangerous ascent of Maroccos. Round and round, and up gigantic rocky steps, our poor tired animals plod wearily; above and below us, in wildest profusion, clamber grape vines. By this time the sun's rays are growing intensely hot, and the reflexion of the rocky surface is terrible, so that both horses and riders are grateful to finish the ascent. Reaching an elevation, we pause awhile under the pleasant shade of a huge *kharroubé*, or locust tree, whose long black fruit afford a pleasant repast to our Druse friend, who, besides feasting upon them himself, gives handsful to the horses, who relish this food amazingly. The aspect around is exceedingly limited, being completely shut in by bushes, grape vines, fig trees, and wild jessamine, the odour from the last being truly delightful. Protruding beyond an angle is a corner of the convent, where the monks live in strict celibacy, being hospitable in the extreme to all male visitors who wish to avail themselves of repose or shelter, whilst they are bigoted in excluding all females, even though exposed to the most pitiless pelting storm of snow or rain; but these latter may find refuge in the church, where they are carefully partitioned off from the men.

Passing through fertile country, rich in vineyards and fruit trees, interspersed with beautiful valleys, we ride on, surrounded by the intensest silence. Sometimes, like pleasant music in our solitude, we hearken to the distant tinkling of bells proceeding from some caravan of mules bound to or from Beyrout; these are mostly occupied in carrying lime from the lime-pits at Bêt-Mirih down to the sea coast, where the demand for this article is very great, owing to the rapidly increasing dimensions of Beyrout.

I may here, by way of parenthesis, remark, for the benefit of any who, bound on a similar route, may have lost their guides, or missed their way, that an infallible indication of the right path to be pursued is the traces left by these caravans; quantities of lime being invariably jolted out of the sacks it is carried in, and forming a white track on the mountains.

Before reaching Bêt-Mirih we come to a celebrated kharroubé tree, the usual rendezvous of Europeans in Beyrout, who frequent these parts during the summer months to escape from the excessive heat of the plains. A solitary camel, heavily laden with two huge logs of timber, is plodding unattended and unwatched over the often-passed route with which it has been rendered familiar by months and years of toil, whilst its driver, seated beneath the shade, is reposing awhile, well aware of the faithful nature of his beast. After having slaked his thirst from a huge jar of water left here, and every morning replenished by benevolent villagers for the

benefit of wayfarers, he pursues his way. We alight from our horses, and throwing the bridles over their necks, seat ourselves under the tree and smoke a pipe of repose. It is rarely we are left here long alone; now and then a pretty damsel, laden with water from the distant *ain*, passes by with a pleasant smile of welcome; then comes a muleteer, hot and dusty withal, who sits down and has a pull at the jar, whilst his mules pursue their way. Conversation never flags, for the last arrival has always something fresh to say about the weather, or the scenery, or the prospects of the crops. The clattering of horses' hoofs announces the approach of a fresh batch of travellers. Gentlemen and ladies, children and nurses, servants and donkey boys, mules laden with bedding materials, boxes, and odds and ends, constitute this group. This is some merchant or consul and his family, who, not having slept a wink for the last week or ten days, owing to the heat and mosquitos in Beyrout, have come up for change of air, and to try the efficacy of the mountain breezes; all these are hot and tired and dusty, and are glad to avail themselves of the temporary shelter afforded by this tree.

Leaving these to the enjoyment of repose, we remount our nags and continue our journey. We pass right through the rather insignificant village of Bêt-Mirih, which, however, affords a capital summer retreat to some of the European residents at Beyrout, where some of them combine pleasure with business, and occupy themselves in purchasing cocoons from the silk growers

in the neighbourhood. Striking off to the right, we proceed towards Deir-il-Kala, ever and anon perceiving, *en route*, the preparations made by the natives against the harvest. Choosing out suitable level spots, they prepare these for threshing floors by first levelling the ground, and then making the surface hard and polished by continual wettings and rolling garden stones over them; thus prepared and baked in the sun, they become as hard and durable as stone. They are then formed into a circle by massive stones being piled around; this done, they are ready to receive the wheat. When the harvest has been gathered the husbandmen here collect the wheat, and thresh it; the cool breeze as it sweeps by sifting the husk from the grain by blowing it away, as the grain is tossed in the air with wide wooden pitch-forks.

We have been two hours riding over these mountains when we reach the convent at Deir-il-Kala; but before arriving we traverse a perfect desolation, heaps upon heaps of stones interspersed with thorny briars. What fortifications or castles these stones once constituted must ever remain a mystery.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CONVENT AT DEIR-IL-KALA — PROVISIONS FOR THE WINTER — MODE OF MAKING BURGHOL — THE SILKWORM — FIRST STAGE OF EXISTENCE — SHIFTING ITS FIRST SKIN — SECOND STATE OF TORPOR — THE KHOOK — THIRD STATE OF TORPOR — SUPERSTITION — K'FARCHIMA.

> Qui non palazzi, non teatro o loggia,
> Ma'n lor vece un abete, un faggio, un pino
> Trà l'erba verde e'l bel monte vicino,
> Levan di terra al ciel nostr' intelletto.
>
> PETRARCH.

THERE never was a better illustration of the above quotation than is presented to us as we dismount under the shelter of the lofty walls of the convent at Deir-il-Kala, and forage in our saddle-bags for some materials for breakfast. Everything before us, perhaps with the solitary exception of the convent itself, speaks clearly of the handiwork of nature, untouched or undisfigured by the hand or art of man. Many years ago, perhaps centuries, some edifice existed, the foundations of which we can still clearly trace; but the ruthless hand of time has levelled this with the

mountain surface, and the fragments and stones have been used in the construction of the modern convent. From this elevated position, in an atmosphere so transcendently clear as that which Syria enjoys, we are afforded an extensive and uninterrupted view of many miles circuit; far away, dwindled into nothingness in the distance, we perceive the small headland, behind which is situated the city of Tripoli; then a vast sheet of ocean, clearly defining where the sea terminates and where the sky commences, stretches across from left to right. On this vast mass of waters, large ships, plying to and fro with merchandise and passengers, are dimly discernible, like indistinct specks upon the deep blue colour of the sea. Nearer still, flashing in the golden sunlight like the expanded wings of the sea-gull, appear the lateen sails of coasting vessels; then in a confused mass, we note the spot supposed to mark the site of Beyrout. Clear skies of atmosphere intervene, whilst miles of the level ground are shut out from our gaze by the tops of the trees growing upon the nearer elevation of the intervening mountains. The breeze up here is invigorating and refreshing in the extreme, which, in conjunction with the exercise of the morning, is sure to add a keen edge to our appetites; under which influence a cold fowl of yesterday, the hard-boiled eggs, bread and cheese, etc., diminish in their proportions. The k'dames in the Druse's pocket have been reduced to just half the original quantity.

Leaving the convent at Deir-il-Kala, we proceed on our journey to the left, and very shortly have evidence that we are entering upon that region almost exclusively inhabited by the Druses. Our road is one succession of alternate hill and valley, interspersed at intervals of every few miles with small Druse and Maronite villages, the inhabitants of most of which are at this hour of the day absent on their various callings. Some of the females, however, are busy upon their house-tops spreading out mats on the terraced roofs, and here exposing to the sun the figs which have been gathered in and slit open, and which, when properly dried, will be put away in earthen jars and serve as part and portion of the provision laid by for winter use. When these figs are packed into the jars, the women get in after every handful, and with their naked feet stamp upon them so as to compress them in the most compact manner; the more effectually to accomplish this, they sprinkle the figs at intervals with a treacley substance extracted from the kharroubé, which saccharine matter helps to consolidate the mass. Many of these huge lumps of figs are afterwards exposed for sale in the bazaars at Beyrout and Sidon, where the shopkeepers cut large slices off with a knife and sell them by weight. But the Druse women, at this particular season of the year, have other domestic occupations which must be all completed before the fine weather passes away.

First of all, there is the staple commodity of life

amongst all classes inhabiting Syria, to wit, the *burghol*, a gritty substance made from the wheat; and as we pass along from these villages we encounter, at various houses, females in every stage of burghol making. First, there is the careful Druse wife washing the wheat in a huge cauldron close to her hut door: this is the preliminary process. Her neighbour, who has been more industrious than herself, has completed the washing, and is spreading out the wet grain upon mats to dry; and what with the cats running to and fro, and thievish sparrows and equally thievish cocks and hens, she has enough to do to keep the Philistines away from her wheat, even though assisted by all the junior members of the family, who, armed with sticks and branches, hoot at and frighten the invaders away. In the next village, the drying process has been completed, and the good woman of the house is boiling the grain previous to its undergoing a second drying and airing; when this much has been done, then the woman shifts the responsibility off her shoulders to those of her husband. Early in the morning the Druse husband gets up, and lading his donkey with sacks containing the boiled wheat, he goes off to the nearest mill, where, for a consideration, it is ground into two distinct substances, which are carefully separated and packed in separate sacks; the larger and coarser grits serving exclusively for the manufacture of *kubbé*, the finer being boiled and used as a substitute for rice in pilaufs, etc.

But besides the burghol and the figs, the Druse housewife has many little but indispensable preparations to make against the winter. In the back gardens grow chilies and onions and garlic, to say nothing of cucumbers and vegetables. The green chilies are culled, and being split open, mixed in jars with salt and water, being eventually drained and covered with vinegar; in the same way, cucumbers, walnuts, batinjans, and even radishes, are pickled. The red chilies are strung to long pieces of twine and suspended from the house-top to dry; the same process is undergone by the onions and garlic, and at proper seasons are added walnuts and raisins, olives, and many other trifles, indispensable for the comfort of the family and for the display of that hospitality for which the Druses are notorious.

Proceeding onwards, and protected from the fierce heat of the sun's rays by the pleasant shade of mountain pines, we are continually encountering horse-loads of cocoons, the fruit of the industry of the Druse silk rearer. The whole process, from hatching the silkworm eggs till the moment that the worm becomes a cocoon, is one series of anxiety and labour to the peasant; the worms are so delicate that the smallest change of temperature exposes them to destruction, and the peasant can never confidently count upon reaping a harvest until the cocoon is fairly set.

The spring, which is later by two weeks on these

mountains than in the plains below, has barely given indication of its approach by breathing softly from the south over nature, before the silkworm egg is hatched, and the small buds of the mulberry begin to sprout. In the first stage of their existence the worms are barely bigger than small red ants, which they amazingly resemble as hungry thousands of them swarm over the tender small leaves of the mulberry. The solitary leaf upon which a hundred worms are now feeding, would in the course of a month be barely sufficient to afford a mouthful to one worm, so large and so rapid is their growth. But wherever we look for it, whether on the mountain-top or in the plain, whether in the atmosphere or under the surface of the ocean, on land or on sea, we are sure to find convincing proofs of the forethought and wonderful providence of the Creator. Perhaps, however, it is seldom more palpably evident to the eyes and understanding of the veriest atheist than in the case of the silkworm, a delicate fragile creature whose first tender size one ordinary puff of wind might scatter to the four winds. At that particular season, however, when the egg is suffered to be hatched, the warm breath of the south wind fans dormant nature into existence, the icy fetters of the winter have been burst asunder by the gradually increasing and congenial heat of the sun. The worm is hatched not one hour or one minute before its appointed time, which time is in these parts regulated by the forwardness, or otherwise, of the mulberry plants; so

soon, however, as these plants bud, then there is the wherewithal to satisfy the cravings of the tender worms, and they are called into existence. One week before, and they must have perished of starvation, as there is no other plant upon which they will subsist; one week later, and the mulberry leaf would have grown too coarse for their tender digestion; they are both born simultaneously, and as the worm thrives and grows larger and stronger, so in exact proportion the leaves upon the mulberry expand and afford additional nutriment, so that when the leaf has attained its full growth the worm has finished eating, and seeks out among briars and thorns a convenient nook for weaving its own tomb.

During this interval, however, much labour devolves upon the peasant and all his family. In the first instance, the worms are no sooner hatched than they are separated and placed by small lots in different flat baskets, well prepared for this purpose, by being clayed over and baked in the sun, so that not one worm should lose itself. This done, they have to collect the tender buds of the mulberry three or four times a day, and to carefully free these leaves from dew or any damp, which would inevitably prove destructive to the worm. In the course of a week the silkworm shifts its first skin, a process which ordinarily destroys one-third of the original number hatched. For twenty-four hours the worms remain without nutriment, and during this interval the more

superstitious peasantry suppose that these insects, like good Christians, are undergoing a self-imposed fast. The peasant's wife, early and late, watches for the first indication of the return of animation; no sooner do the worms begin to move than fresh leaves are culled and placed carefully in the baskets; in less than ten minutes these are swarming with such of the worms as have survived the process. To separate these from the dead, is the peasant's first care, and having provided fresh baskets for that purpose, the transfer is easily effected by lifting out leaf after leaf of silkworms.

By this time the insect is full half an inch long, and with increasing size its appetite becomes more voracious; the leaf, however, has also considerably increased in size, but the peasant is now compelled to mount the tree and strip the leaves from off the branches at those points where their growth is tenderest.

The peasant's wife, so soon as the sun is fairly up, brings all the baskets out into the open air, and supplying the worms with leaves, is every morning obliged to shift them from basket to basket, so as to throw away all the refuse and dirt accumulated from yesterday, which would prove detrimental to the health of the worm. In about eight days, and when the worms are full an inch and a half long, they again relapse into a second torpor, which is of rather longer duration than the first; they are now, however, considerably stronger, and rid themselves of their skins with greater facility and less danger.

The silkworms have now grown too large, and there are too many of them, to admit of their being kept any longer in these baskets; the peasant, however, has long since provided against this want. In the *khook*, (a long narrow room, built of clay and stones, and covered in so as to exclude the wet, with several large windows, which are filled up with brambles so as to admit of a free circulation of air, at the same time that they exclude serpents and other reptiles,) the peasant has erected several *batours*, or shelves, composed of light cane-work, and which are supported by strong poles extending the whole length of the khook; to these shelves the worms are now transferred, and here they remain until the cocoon is fairly set. Now, however, the peasant's labour has immensely increased; in lieu of stripping the leaves from the branches he is compelled to resort to the axe, and lop off branch after branch; these are laden upon donkey-back, and carried to the peasant's hut, where the leaves are stripped off and given to the worms, whilst the branches are thrown aside and heaped up to serve as fuel for the winter.

Any one entering the khooks at this stage of affairs would be surprised at the avidity with which the worms devour the leaves, producing, in the act of mastication, a noise similar to the pattering of rain on the house-top; only the fibres of the leaf are left, so perfectly has the worm dissected it. In about a fortnight's time the mulberry plantations are beginning

to look bare and leafless; whole fields of trees have had all their branches lopped off, and there remains just a sufficiency to supply the ravenous worms with food for the short time they will yet remain before constructing the cocoon.

A third and last state of torpor intervenes, longer in duration than the two preceding lethargies. The worm has now attained its full growth, and the larger and better sort are full two inches and a half long, plump and white, with a soft skin, similar to velvet or satin. At length their term of existence as worms has expired, and not a leaf is anywhere to be seen upon the stunted and denuded trees. Suddenly the noise of incessant mastication ceases in the khooks, and the little silkworm, which has heretofore adhered with amazing pertinacity to one spot on the shelves, begins to crawl about restlessly in all directions, and give unmistakeable indications of its inclination to weave its cocoon. The peasant has provided against this emergency by two days' hard labour amongst the brushwood and briars growing wild on the mountains; donkey-loads of this have been piled up at the khook door, and these are now carefully spread over the shelves; with remarkable instinct, the worms immediately take to them, and as quickly choosing out their respective positions, commence operations. Immediately the silkworm begins its cocoon, its whole nature and substance seem to undergo a remarkable change; in lieu of the plump white firm creature of yes-

terday, we now see a transparent and golden-coloured worm.

The peasant, however, is unwilling to permit of our remaining and watching operations. Traditional superstition has inculcated in him a dread of the evil eye; if we stop and admire the wisdom displayed by the worm, it will, in his opinion, be productive of evil results: either the cocoon will be badly formed, or the silk will be worthless; so, first clearing the place of all intruders, he puts a huge padlock on the door, and locking the khook, deposits the key in his *zinnar* or waistband. Next week he will come and take out the cocoons, and separating these from the briars, choose out a sufficiency for breeding purposes, and all the rest are handed over to the women of his family. These first of all disentangle the cocoon from the rich and fibrous web with which it is enveloped, and which constitutes an article of trade by itself. The cocoon is then either reeled off by the peasant himself or else sold to some of the silk factories in the neighbourhood, where they are either immediately reeled off or else suffocated in an oven, and afterwards, being well aired and dried, piled up in the magazines of the factory.

Such is a brief account, or history, of these cocoons, of which we are continually encountering horse-load after horse-load. As you will perceive, unless suffering from a severe cold in the head, the odour arising from these cocoons is not the most agreeable; but this arises partly from the neglect and want of care of the peasants

themselves, who reeling off basket full after basket full of cocoons, suffer the dead insects within to be thrown about and accumulate round the house, where they putrefy, and emit noxious vapours. Thus encountering, alternately, villages, and men and women, and cattle laden with the fruits of their labour, we pass on through the beautiful and fertile country of these secluded people, till the afternoon finds us entering upon the more level country where is situated one of the principal mountain villages. It is here that our Druse friend resides, and as he is very pressing in his invitation for us to stay a day or so with him and see what Druse life is amongst the Druses, we accept his hospitality, and alight at his door in the village of K'farchima.

CHAPTER V.

K'FARCHIMA—OIL MILL—OLIVE GROVES—ANCIENT CUSTOMS—MORAL CHARACTERISTICS—THE PALACE OF THE EMIR—THE RECEPTION HALL—DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERIOR—CEREMONIOUS RECEPTION THE EMIR'S DAUGHTERS—OUR HOST.

So pass'd they on
O'er Juda's hills, and whereso'er the leaves
Of the broad sycamore made sounds at noon,
Like lulling raindrops.

MRS. HEMANS.

K'FARCHIMA is one of the most considerable villages situated on the Lebanon, comprising between three and four hundred houses and huts, of all sizes and descriptions of architecture, and inhabited chiefly by Druses and Maronites. Very few of the habitations are mixed, the Druses, who are the most numerous, occupying a distinct quarter of the village to that inhabited by the Maronites. Our Druse friend holds a middling rank amongst the villagers, and his house is neither a palace nor yet an hovel; but of this, more anon. Before entering in and partaking of his hospitality, we descend from our horses, and leaving them to the humane care

of the Druse's wife, we stroll on and take a survey of the village and the surrounding scenery. Climbing up the little hill whose summit is occupied by the palace of the Emir M'rad, and standing here, we get a bird's-eye view of the whole village. Before us is the mountain Deir-il-Karkafé, up to whose very summit pine trees grow in the utmost luxuriance; between this hill and where we stand is a verdant valley, with several large rough stone buildings which serve as pens for the goats and poultry at night, and which defy the thievish propensities of the jackals and foxes so numerous in this neighbourhood.

Further to the right is a considerable oil-mill, now in full play; a fine spring of water falling from reservoir to reservoir, finally gushes under the archway of this mill, and in passing, turns the wheel which sets the whole machinery in operation; on the other side the water gushes out a perpetual foaming cataract, roaring and bounding from embankment to embankment till the whole air around resounds with the voice of many waters. Here the villagers at the season of the olive harvest repair with their mule-loads of freshly-culled olives, which are immediately carried into the mill and converted into oil; the stones and the remnants, like witnesses to the activity of the miller, are heaped up in small hillocks all around the building, whilst with Oriental lassitude, and full well certain of the excellence of his machinery, the old miller himself occasionally emerges from the hot and stifling atmo-

sphere of the mill to take a few whiffs of his much-loved pipe, under the shade of the solitary mulberry which overhangs the foaming cataract. To the right, again, remarkable only from its barren aspect in comparison with all that surrounds it, stands a solitary hill, thickly grown over with brushwood, up whose sides grape vines have been carefully trained, creeping from stunted fig tree to fig tree, yet in autumn rich in clusters of golden fruit that hang refulgent in the sunlight.

Palpable objects against the dingy ground-work of this hill are flocks of many-coloured goats, chewing the cud of contentment, and patiently waiting for the summons of their shepherd when he comes to guide them at sunset to the margin of some peaceful stream, whence, having slaked their thirst, they are driven to the pens and folds already indicated. To the left, and immediately under us, are the houses and gardens of the village itself; beyond this, again, a vast table-land, gradually undulating and thickly covered with the most luxuriant olive groves, above whose comparatively stunted growth taller palm trees here and there rear their exalted heads, like so many careful watchmen, left there to guard the olives against all invaders. At the present moment of gazing, the cool sea breeze is rustling mightily amongst the branches of the olives, scattering the dry leaves and twigs and spreading the surface of the earth with the golden-tinged mantle of autumn; but all this is nothing to the rustling and havoc that will ensue amongst those branches when the harvest season

for olives shall have arrived; then men and boys will be perched upon every available branch, shaking the very existence out of the trees in their endeavours to gather in as abundant an harvest as possible, whilst the women and girls, with out-spread mats, expanded aprons, and plentiful baskets, catch and collect the showering olives as they fall; and finally gathering these into the baskets, assort them for the various purposes they are intended to serve: some are preserved in salt and water, the rest are converted into oil.

But it is a remarkable fact, and one which proves the very ancient standing of the habits and customs of these people, that when a man has once descended from a tree, having shaken off as much fruit as his strength permitted, he will upon no consideration shake that tree again, however much fruit may have tenaciously adhered to the boughs. What is left is considered as the portion of the poor and the gleaner: in this instance, the Druses, in common with all classes inhabiting Syria, act in strict accordance with the law contained in Deuteronomy, 24th chapter and 20th verse: "*When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow.*" However much in form, and even in theory, the religion of the different sects may have deviated and degenerated from the purer law of those people to whom these very mountains were only a portion of the promised land, they invariably retain some unmistakeable proofs of the

spring or fountain-head from which they derived their notions; crudely and barbarously as that and all other sections or fragments of that law may have been treated. The same forbearance in favour of the destitute and oppressed which is observed in gathering in the olive harvest, is also rigidly adhered to in almost every other source of labour which is connected with reaping the produce of the earth. In wheat and grain, the peasant will barely turn back to pick up a fallen sheaf if a poor gleaner be gleaning in his track, and a very fair portion is usually left upon the field to be divided between the poor, and the still more industrious birds of the air; this is also the case with the grape harvest, the fig harvest, and, in short, the season of reaping all fruits and grains. The landowner would sleep with but an heavy conscience and become an object for the finger of scorn to point at, did he not leave a willing *disme* for the benefit of the destitute and houseless. Moreover, with very rare exceptions, oxen or mules are seldom if ever muzzled when treading out the corn; nor will they, when they have any possible means of avoiding it, yoke together beasts of unequal strength to bear the same burden; you seldom meet in Syria with an ox and a mule yoked to the same plough.

We now proceed to enter the palace of the Emir, having first of all sent him word of our intention. Of the palace or its entrance gate there is not much to be recorded; in any other large town of Syria, an ordinary caravansary might rival it in beauty of

architecture and surpass it in strength: for this village, however, it is a prominent and remarkable edifice, fitted to be the habitation of a chief. On entering, we first come into an extensive yard paved with pebbles and kept in decent order by frequent sweepings; to our right, on entering, is the Emir's reception hall, remarkable only for the manifold purposes which it is made to serve; for it is the dining-room of the family, the bed-room of the servants and occasional distinguished guests, and sometimes affords shelter to one or more of the Emir's favourite mares. Here, seated on a divan, is the Emir himself, who rises politely and advances to receive us at the entrance: we ourselves enter, but our friend, the Druse, who has left his shoes outside the door, squats himself down in the yard and keeps at a respectful distance. The Emir is a fine-looking man, yet in the prime of life, and his manners are extremely courteous; his dress only differs from that of the ordinary class of natives inasmuch as that he sports an additional meshlah, or red cloth cloak. His stockings have not yet been woven, and his slippers are carefully deposited on the extreme edge of the fine turcoman carpet which runs along the divan.

Being seated, we undergo the usual ceremonial so indispensable with Oriental etiquette, of salaaming to each other and inquiring affectionately after the health of ourselves, our kindred, and our household. After this we have time to make a rapid survey of

the room and its contents. The room itself is about thirty feet square by about fifteen in height, and is entirely lined with pine planks, painted and variegated in a grotesque style ; round three sides of it, at about a yard from the ceiling, runs a wooden shelf, upon which are displayed the hardware and plate belonging to the family, and consisting of several ordinary bowls, a dessert plate or two of the common blue pattern, with the bridge and fisherman and the birds fighting in the air ; besides these, there are some larger plates, an old tumbler or two, half a dozen bottles corked with rags, dusty tin boxes full of mysterious medicinal herbs, three or four narghilès, a brave display of trays, a heap of unprepared *tumbac*, besides several small *finjans* and time-worn coffee pots. If you were to ask me when these shelves were last dusted, I should be plunged into endless difficulty, for the problem is more than I or any man on the mountains can solve. The corners of the ceiling are enclosed in a careful network of cobwebs, and the ceiling itself elegantly variegated with the smoke from countless tobacco pipes and narghilès.

Under the shelves the walls are variously decorated. In one place, conspicuous to the English stranger, is pasted against the wall the invariable vignette of London, torn from the first page of one of the earliest numbers of the Illustrated London News, which the Emir treasures as the costly souvenir of some great English *milord* who travelled in these mountains

many years gone by, and which, in all probability, had been used by the *milord's* servant to wrap a cold fowl or a remnant of cheese. However this may be, after the *milord* had left, the precious remnant was picked up in the yard and treasured as a picture of rare and intrinsic merit. From hooks and nails are pendant swords, yataghans, pistols, and muskets; and in the way of drapery, we have the Emir's state cloak, one or two coils of turbans, and a gaily-embroidered jacket, the property of Mrs. Emir, or one of the daughters, and which is only donned on high-days and holidays. In two corners are open recesses or cupboards with trellis-work doors, inside of which, carefully covered over with napkins, are small saucers with conserves of roses, orange-flower, and violet, besides some half dozen diminutive little wine glasses, and a couple of long-spouted gilt and gaily-ornamented glass decanters which are sometimes filled with rose water, but most usually with raki of the superfine quality.

The divan is covered with ordinary furniture—chintz of a large gaudy pattern—and all the pillows are the same. At the further end, near the entrance door, stands a large mangel, or brazier, which is used in winter to warm the apartment, but which now only serves for supplying pipes and narghilès with live coals. Opposite to this mangel stands a dwarf stool of rare and antique workmanship, inlaid with a very pretty mosaic work of ivory and mother-of-pearl; no

one but a cat would ever think of sitting upon this, as it is only used as a substitute for a dining table, and that only upon state occasions. By the time that we have completed this brief survey, the servants of the Emir have been thoroughly aroused from their afternoon siesta and are now busy serving the guests; one fellow, with naked feet, walks a tip-toe over the patterns of the carpet, and stepping upon the divan dislodges a couple of narghilès, and carries them off to be duly prepared; another has taken away the heap of tumbac, whilst a third has possessed himself of all the finjans and a coffee pot. Very quickly the narghilès have been prepared and are presented to us with all the grace of Oriental etiquette; no dancing master in Paris could execute a more graceful pirouette than does the lad who presents us with the snake of the narghilè. We smoke, and the emir talks upon a hundred different topics; the weather, the crops, our journey, and many other trifling incidents are duly discussed. By this time the coffee has been boiled, and one servant bearing the tray with the finjans, another carrying the coffee, present themselves, and we are served. As we return the empty cups, after having swallowed their hot and bitter contents, we turn ourselves half round towards the Emir, and raising the right hand to the forehead, acknowledge his civility by this dumb show. A few seconds afterwards another servant comes and rummages in the dingy recesses of the cupboards, whence are extracted

the conserves and the raki before alluded to, and having tasted and drank of these, and duly wiped our mouths upon the scented Turkey towels, which are miniatures of those ordinarily met with in barber's shops, only that they are as white as snow and cleanly withal, our visit is at an end.

The Emir tells us, with many regrets and much etiquette, that his wife and daughters, who are the rosebuds of this dreary wilderness, have been compelled to absent themselves to assist at the nuptials of some distant relation in one of the neighbouring villages, otherwise they would have had the honour, and we the extreme gratification of being waited on and amused by the converse sweet of these ladies, to say nothing to experiencing a perfect shower of rose water sprinkled from blue and gilt bottles, with narrow tapering necks, by the delicate but henni-dyed hands of the ladies themselves.

We tell the Emir that we are the losers by this mishap, and so we are if any faith can be placed in report, for the Emir's daughters are reputed to be very doves of beauty and elegance, with eyes mild as the summer moonbeam, beautifully-painted eyebrows, lips that might be made perfect reservoirs of nectar by any ordinary poet, and jet black tresses which are said to sweep the floor as these beautiful sylphs tread like fairies upon the carpet, their naked feet rivalling in brilliancy of colour (being carefully dyed overnight twice a week,) the very carpet they tread upon.

Such are these fair damsels reputed to be. Alas! the fates have not decreed that we should bask in the sunshine of their smiles; and this being the case, and our host himself looking rather hungry, we make a low salaam to the Emir, and accompany the Druse to his own house.

CHAPTER VI.

THE EUROPEAN HAT—INTERIOR OF THE DRUSE'S HOUSE—PREPARATIONS FOR SUPPER—THE DESSERT—ABOU SHEIN'S HISTORY—THE FRIENDLESS LAD—LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT—EARLY OBSTACLES—THE BLIND OLD BEGGAR—A "GIN"—PRISON-BREAKING—THE ESCAPE—BEGINNING OF TROUBLES—THE CONSCRIPTION—TURKISH SOLDIERS—NEW HOPES AWAKENED—SUCCESSFUL EFFORTS—THE TANTOUR—DRUSE OPULENCE—A STERN FATHER THE RETURN HOME—DRUSE PHILOSOPHY.

> Kinder than polish'd slaves, though not so bland,
> They piled the hearth, ...
> And fill'd the bowl and trimm'd the cheerful lamp,
> And spread their fare; though homely, all they had.
>
> CHILDE HAROLD.

Our Druse's house is a strong, square, but unshapely building, erected upon a solid foundation, and built of solid materials; hard square stones, with roughly-finished doors and windows, and a terraced roof supported upon unplaned pine trees, and composed of branches, briars, odds and ends of planks, etc., over which is a heavy pile of earth, well rolled in and covered over with mortar; in the centre of the roof is a smoke hole, a species of original chimney, made of two loose stones covered over with a third. In many houses the grass grows luxuriantly over the ledges.

In front of the house is an even piece of ground, prepared and hardened, kept clean and pure by frequent sprinklings of water and sweepings, where the family usually congregate in the cool of the evening, and the master sits and smokes his pipe, whilst his wife and children listen to each others' tales, or else amuse themselves in harmless gambols.

At all seasons of the year a remarkable feature in connection with these houses is to be seen, – the hand-mill so often alluded to in Holy Writ; here the women of the family busy themselves in grinding grain, red chilies, and other substances used in a pulverized condition for culinary purposes.

At the moment that we reach our host's house his family are congregated in this front yard, and they rise to welcome us with innate hospitality. To the children, ourselves and costume are especially a source of inquisitive amusement,—the European hat, in particular, forming a theme of some hours' conversation. They do not, however, in our days evince such spleen towards Europeans and their hats, as seems to have been the case when the late Mr. Burkhardt visited these mountains, for he says, that the greatest insult one Druse can offer to another is to express a wish that "*God may put a hat upon him.*" The colonisation of Beyrout by Europeans, and their frequent intercourse with the Druses, may, in some measure, account for the abolition of this absurd malediction.

Now-a-days the Druse children, as well as the Druses

themselves, may offer a harmless insult to that much-respected portion of European costume by comparing it to a cooking pot; but I have often seen them divest themselves of their turbans for the sake of donning my hat, and having a hearty laugh at the grotesque figure they cut in it.

After admiring the rosy and healthy appearance of the children, whose cheeks and lips speak volumes as to the salubrity of the climate, we enter into the house.

The whole of the interior is divided into four compartments by means of rude mats; of these, the largest is the sitting room, where we enter and seat ourselves upon a dingy divan in the further corner; of the other three compartments, one serves as a warehouse for necessary household provisions, another as a dormitory for the Druse's daughter and his other children, whilst the third serves as a sleeping room for the Druse, his wife, and ourselves.

Here, as is the case in several parts of Ireland, donkeys and cattle occasionally share the shelter of the same roof.

At present, however, the sitting-room is occupied exclusively by ourselves and the Druse's family, and whilst we are served with pipes, the wife and the daughter busy themselves in preparations for the evening repast. In the centre of the room is a species of primitive oven, in which all the bread of the family is baked; it consists of a hole dug in the earth and then carefully plastered, in which a wood-fire is lit, the hot embers of which having heated the whole to a proper

pitch are swept into the centre, when the woman who has been kneading the flour rolls it out into long oval sheets of the consistency of an ordinary sheet of brown paper; these are then placed or stretched over the hot orifice of the oven, and the wet dough being cemented to the edges, the heat within bakes the bread with inconceivable rapidity. This, when hot and crisp, is really a capital substitute for the real article.

Whilst the bread has been baking in the room under our very noses, preparations have been going on out of doors for the more substantial ingredients which are to constitute our supper; and the whole material, table, plates, wooden spoons, and supper, are carried in bodily and placed before us. The table itself is of circular form, not more than six inches in height, so that as we sit cross-legged on the low divan we can easily dip into the various dishes set before us, although, from the uninitiated, it requires some degree of skill to prevent tilting over and falling nose foremost into the smoking pilauf. We are supposed to be too hungry to stop and enumerate the dishes as we taste of them, the reader must therefore be content with a general idea of their component parts.

Rice and meat and stewed vegetables, with curdled milk, are the leading features. There is only one dish of peculiarly Druse origin; this is wheat boiled with sugar and milk, or sugar and water, constituting, as I can say by experience, a very palatable dish. During

our repast the ladies of the family can by no argument of ours be induced to sit and eat with us; they therefore content themselves with serving the master of the house and his guests, and by fetching water whenever that beverage is called for.

Meanwhile the children, who are looking on in hungry expectation, receive occasional tokens of affection from their father in the shape of half-picked bones, which, having entirely divested of meat, they, in their turn, very liberally bestow upon a favourite cat, so that by the time supper is ended the whole floor is strewed with fragments and odds and ends.

Without removing any of the dishes of the first course, these are piled together, and room is made for the dessert, which consists of all the fruits that may chance to be in season, or, in their absence, of dried figs, walnuts, pistacheos, and sundry sweetmeats, prominent amongst which latter is the *haléwé*, composed chiefly of flour and the juice extracted from the kharroubé. The table now disappears as it came, and being deposited in the yard in front of the door, the women and children immediately make an onslaught upon the remnants. Meanwhile the floor is swept up, pipes and coffee are introduced, and lolling back on the divan we make kef.

There is not much that comes within the grasp of our visual survey which can afford a pleasant theme for cogitation; the walls and the roof itself are dusky and dingy, and the only furniture consists in unshapely

baskets and boxes, heaps of mattresses, and festoons of onions, garlic, and chilies, which latter do not add much to the purity of the atmosphere within doors.

Having come to this conclusion, we propose an adjournment to the open air, where, supplied with cushions and carpets, we inhale the delightful breeze of the mountains, and watch the darker shadows of evening as they fall upon the scenery around us. The women busy themselves in-doors spreading out the mattresses and making up the beds necessary for the repose of the family and the guests. The children, who usually go to rest with the cocks and hens soon after sunset, have exhausted their curiosity, and having eaten almost to repletion, are soon wrapped in the arms of Morpheus.

The solitary old lamp, in a niche, is lighted and burns dimly inside, when our Druse, shaking out the ashes from his empty pipe and replenishing it from his tobacco pouch, volunteers to tell us his own history, which, having been tinged with romance, is here retailed for the benefit of the reader.

If it has nothing amusing in itself, it at least possesses the merit of proving, beyond contradiction, that wild and demi-civilised though they be, their ties and links of affection are as firmly riveted as those of a people possessing superior attributes. Even Saint Preux and Julie never gave stronger evidence of the congenial warmth of affection than did this Druse in his early love affairs.

"When I was quite a young man," commences our host, "having barely seen eighteen summers, and when I was possessed of nothing in the world save an old abaya and a strong pair of boots—Allah be praised for his subsequent mercies to me!—I happened to be coming from Beyrout one day, weary and exhausted from the heat, when, arriving at yonder kharroubé tree, I sat down to repose awhile and wipe the heavy heat-drops away from my brow. Thirsty and weary as I was, I longed for some kind ministering angel to come and pour a drop of pure spring water into my parched mouth. It is true that there was a spring not twenty yards from where I sat, yet so great was my lassitude that I could not muster sufficient energy to creep thither and slake my thirst.

"Allah Kerim! said I; some of the women of the village will by and by be passing with their pitchers, and then I shall crave from them a supply. I had hardly come to this conclusion when a very pretty damsel, the daughter of a Druse inhabiting this village, tripped lightly by and filled the pitcher at the neighbouring spring. As she repassed, perceiving a stranger watching her, she modestly drew her veil across her face, not however before I had been secretly and earnestly gazing upon its beauty; and oh! how beautiful I thought she looked at that moment.

"I was a poor lad without friends and nearly without subsistence, yet somehow or other something seemed to whisper to me that if I only made a good bold

attempt, I could marry that girl, and afterwards settle down comfortably for life. Quick as thought I rose up from my sitting posture, and following, implored her for the love of heaven to let me drink from the pitcher she carried. The girl stopped as though surprised and offended at the request, and pointing to the spring intimated that there was abundance of what I asked for there. Most true, O beautiful damsel, I replied, but that is all simple insipid water, whereas the light of your smile has imparted honey to the flavour of that in yonder pitcher.

"The young girl, smiling at the flowery rhetoric of her admirer, could no longer refuse, but lowering the jar from her shoulder allowed me to quaff deeply of its contents, meanwhile the veil had fallen aside from her face and she stood then revealed a perfect sylph of beauty; I told her as much at the time,—nay, I told her much more; for I said that I was young and willing, and strong and hearty, and I flattered myself, not very bad looking; moreover, that it was my determination, if she only would grant her consent, to make her my bride before the moon was a month older.

"Somehow or other she seemed rather to enter into the wild schemes of my imagination; then and there we secretly plighted our troths to each other, and agreed at certain periods to make that spot our rendezvous until time and opportunity should occur for the realisation of our daydream of happiness.

"Soon afterwards, having borrowed a second-hand suit of clothes from a neighbour, and put on as bold and independent an aspect as possible, I called upon the father and mother of the girl and made my proposals of marriage. A very proud, haughty man was the father, and he only heaped insults upon my late parent's beard by calling me the impudent son of a spendthrift, and scion of a worthless stock, whose whole connections could not muster together fifty piastres for the expenses of our wedding. I told him very meekly in reply, that it was true that I had only *ashreen musrié*, about three farthings sterling, in my pocket, but then I had health and strength and good-will in my favour, and *il hamd'l Allah*, there was plenty of occupation for active hands on the mountains.

"All my arguments were of no avail; the father only grew more furious, and the mother threatened to throw her *béboug* at me. Just at this critical moment the daughter happened to come in, and, seeing my discomfiture, burst into tears. I then told the parents that it was no use their putting obstacles in the way, as the daughter and I had already plighted our troths; and that when a woman has made up her mind to do anything, no physical force can hinder her.

"That very night the girl was sent away to Brummana, another village, to be strictly guarded by some relatives until the father should force her to marry a wealthy old sheik who had previously set his heart

upon the girl. For two whole weeks I had no intimation of her whereabouts; fasting and miserable, and with barely any rest at night, I prowled about the neighbourhood in desperate uncertainty as to what had become of the girl, or whether even she had not proved faithless to me and been frightened into submission by her parents.

"At length, when verging upon despair and insanity, I went one day to the hut of the blind old beggar who lives on the high road at the foot of Deir-il-Karkafé. Though poor, I had often assisted this old man with such trifles as I could spare, and I thought that he might perhaps console and advise me in my troubles.

"The result was beyond my expectations; the blind old man, who had very acute hearing, informed me to my indescribable joy that he had heard the voice of my lady-love loudly bewailing her lot, as she was borne against her will by several mountaineers passing the spot he inhabited, and inquiring what was the matter, he had been told that the girl was on her way to Brummana to guard her from any intercourse with myself. This was enough for me; arming myself with a stout cudgel and a good strong rope, I immediately proceeded to Brummana, but by the time I reached that village, the sun had set in the west.

"I asked a shepherd where the relatives of the father of the girl lived, and he indicated the house,

adding at the same time, though wholly unaware of my errand, that the girl was confined in a solitary outhouse whose doors were locked and bolted, and whence she was only to come forth on the morning appointed for her bridal.

"Silently and quietly I prowled about that neighbourhood until night had fairly set in, and no jackal ever watched for his prey more eagerly and secretly than I watched.

"By and by I saw an old man, carrying a lantern, and followed by a woman with a pitcher and some supper, undo the heavy bolts of that door; they only waited till the girl should light a little lamp, and then bidding her good night gruffly, they locked the doors again and withdrew. One by one I heard all the doors of the surrounding houses closed for the night, and then warily creeping along under the dark shadow of walls and pieces of rock, I clambered stealthily upon the roof of the room, and stretching myself out so as to insert my head into the aperture in the centre, (used as a chimney,) I gently whispered the girl's name, and adjured her to be of good courage. It was some moments before I could convince her of the reality of my presence; at first she thought I was a "*gin*," and was upon the point of screaming out for assistance; poking my head further in, however, she was just able by the dim light of the lamp to recognise my features, and then her joy was even greater than her fear had been. I earnestly implored her not to

lose a moment in useless exclamations or questions, but at once to solve the problem how I was to get her out of that room without waking the family, or any of the neighbours.

"Opening the doors, even had they been simply bolted, was out of the question, but on looking round the room, where she had been confined, we luckily discovered a spade, that had been thrown there by some of the peasantry; this she handed me through the aperture, and noiselessly and stealthily I immediately began removing the earth upon the terrace, so as to widen the hole sufficiently large to admit of her passing through it. This was a work of agonising suspense and terror to myself; in ten minutes, however, it was accomplished.

"I looked around to see that there was no one watching our proceedings;—everything was silent, and dark as night itself. I knotted the rope I had brought to the centre of the cudgel, and suspending this over the aperture, let down the other end of the cord, and entreated the girl to fasten it securely round her girdle. Just at this moment a troop of hungry jackals began yelling and making the most discordant noise right in the very centre of the village.

"I threw myself flat upon my face, and held my breath, cursing inwardly the disturbance these animals were making, which was quite enough to rouse up the whole village; the bark of a few village curs was, however, the only notice taken of these nocturnal

invaders. Trembling in every nerve, I rose up and whisperingly inquired of the girl if she was ready; she replied in the affirmative, and in two minutes afterwards we were locked in each others embraces.

"The roof of this house, however, was no place for us to make mutual inquiries or give mutual assurances of love and esteem. Gently letting her down, I leapt to the earth lightly, and with the cudgel in one hand and leading her with the other, I crept noiselessly and silently away until distance gave us assurance of safety and unsealed our lips.

"Then we talked bravely of what we should do, and where we should live, and how happily we should get on hereafter. The moon came over the mountains, and shone clearly upon our pathway, and the cool sea-breeze swept pleasantly by from the ocean; we called these two to witness, (for we had no other testimony at hand,) that we would never desert or prove unkind to each other. We walked on stoutly all that night, over the rough uneven ground, until we reached the plains below, and the first people that entered the gates of Beyrout that morning, after they were opened, were myself and my wife.

"I call her my wife," said the Druse, pausing in his pipe, and looking at us through a wreath of smoke, "because there she is," pointing to the comely matron of the house; "that's the girl that I carried away, and I am the man that married her;" and having said this much, the Druse called for coffee, promising that after

we had rested awhile he would resume the thread of his narrative.

"The course of true love, however," continued the Druse, "never in one single instance has been known to run smoothly, and this we found to be the case with us at the very outset of wedded life; what few piastres I could raise by selling my wife's jewels gradually diminished, and starvation seemed to be staring us in the face. I had no good luck of any description, and my health and strength and good-will had no chance of being put to the test. I went to merchants and shopkeepers and begged for employment, but they told me that my garments were so ragged that I had much better set myself up as a scarecrow in a field: labourers were plentiful, so were servants, so were idlers. I tried to turn boatman, but from my want of experience was continually losing my balance, dipping up the oar and splashing all the rest; in addition to all this, the motion of the boat made me feel desperately ill, so that when I had once set foot on shore again I foreswore the sea.

"In this unenviable state of affairs, I found my way to Nahr Beyrout, where an hospitable cafégi, close to the bridge, took compassion upon my state, and gave me food and employment: I made coffee and filled pipes for travellers.

"In all this interval my wife had been equally industrious, and equally unfortunate; she had striven hard to gain employment in some of the European families,

but these were all too well provided with servants who knew their business, to wish to make trial of a stranger. However, things prospered a little at the coffee house. In my spare moments I tilled and cultivated a little plot by the river side, where I reared cucumbers and melons, and by selling these to travellers, I began to realise a little money.

"Things began to look bright again, when suddenly a dark cloud lowered upon the horizon of our happiness, and threatened instantaneously to annihilate for ever all our future plans. A general conscription was being carried on vigorously throughout Syria, and in my unprotected and exposed position I knew I had not the slightest chance of escaping; and that had I been once enlisted, then I might bid adieu for ever to wife and all dreams of home.

"In this state of affairs I was compelled to adopt severe and speedy remedies; there was only the choice left me of momentary anguish and after inconvenience, or of perpetual slavery. I fixed upon the former, and it now only remained for me to determine upon the species of mutilation which would most effectually secure me from the snares of the enlisting party. Either I must chop off the thumb of my right hand, deprive myself of sight, or knock out my fore teeth. A heavy iron hammer was lying conveniently at hand; I seized upon it with all the determination of despair, and in another second had inflicted a terrible blow.

"Here is the result," said the Druse, pausing in his narrative, and pointing to a gap in his mouth, where the whole row of front teeth were wanting; "this effectually protected me from the thraldom of the conscription.

"A few days afterwards, a party of riotous and drunken Turkish soldiers took up their position for the night in the café, and the officer had hardly cast his eye upon me before he declared me a lawful prize to the Sultan; he brought all my limbs under inspection, I was a good height and able-bodied, but when he came to look into my mouth then his indignation knew no bounds, I thought he would have shot me on the spot; however, contenting himself with abusing and striking me with the butt end of a pistol, he declared to his companions that I was unfitted for the service, being disabled from biting off the end of a cartridge.

"This was my last and most trying adventure; after this, things went on smoothly and pleasantly.

"One day I had gone to Beyrout with a basket load of cucumbers, which I sold to Hammood Nouéri, the well-known market gardener who supplies the tables of all the consuls and European merchants in Beyrout; whilst receiving the money in return, a stranger who was passing by, paused and scrutinised my face inquisitively; by and by he made bold to ask me my name and the village I belonged to, and when I had satisfied him on these points he at once embraced me,

declaring that he was nearly related to my father's family and had recognised me from the family likeness. Going with this man to the nearest coffee shop he treated me with coffee and narghilès and begged me to tell him all my past history, present position, and future prospects. This I did candidly and freely, and when I had concluded he assured me that he would immediately proceed to the house of my wife's father, and there arrange matters so that we might again return to our native village and settle down on paternal property.

"Soon after this we separated; the stranger had business in Beyrout which he said might detain him a week or ten days, but at the end of a fortnight or three weeks he promised to call at the coffee house and let me know how matters sped.

"I went home that day to my wife with a lighter heart and brighter hopes than I had ever experienced; she, poor thing, was all in a flutter with joy, fear, and excitement. No captive bird ever bemoaned its liberty more sincerely than did my wife regret the absence of the familiar scenery and haunts of her native mountains, from which she had been now separated upwards of a twelvemonth; and this, as you know, *ya sidé*, was a very long period for a Druse to absent himself from his mountains.

"You *Frangé* think nothing of travelling for months and years together thousands of miles away from your birthplace, and yet seemingly suffer no incon-

venience nor yet allow anything to mar your happiness. Now we Druses, on the contrary, never go a day's journey distant from our villages except from necessity and upon business, and then we are never comfortable or pleased till we reach home again, whilst our friends at home *b'yishtako alai-y-na* (have all thoughts concentrated upon us) as though every footstep were beset by peril and difficulty.

"But to resume my tale. Neither of us slept a wink that night for thinking over the pleasure in store for us, and from anxiety lest the old people should prove obdurate and refuse to pardon the act of disobedience. Meanwhile I was secretly determined not to build too much upon hopes, not to let a reality escape by grasping at a shadow; I determined to persevere in that manual labour which had already earned me a small independence. I added a small piece of uncultivated ground to that which I had already tilled and reaped a harvest from; I bought other vegetable seeds and sowed them here, and when I was occupied by my duties at the coffee house, then my wife helped to weed the garden and watered the plants regularly.

"Things throve, but more than a month had elapsed and as yet no tidings of the stranger. The anxiety and suspense was very cruel to my wife, but for myself, I bore up against them manfully, and I tried to cheer her by the assurance that if things went on prospering as they did, we might then in the course of a year or

two at most return to our native village independent of the assistance or countenance of others.

"So day passed on after day; my vegetables had thriven well, and I supplied the best *batinjans* and *bamias* brought by any villager to the *souk-il-khoudra* (vegetable market). This added considerably to my original stock of piastres, so that by the time that the autumn set in I was not only enabled to purchase all our winter provisions and clothes, but I was in the position to buy my wife a respectable *tantour*, which she immediately donned, and which, as you know, proclaimed her at once to be a woman ranking with all wedded wives amongst our people; in addition to this, I had purchased her some very gay clothes, with a new tarboosh, new slippers, and a new white izar. Even after all these expenses, finding that I had still a few gazis and several twenty-para pieces left, I bored holes through them all, and stringing them upon cords, the former I suspended round her forehead, whilst the latter were fastened to the plaited ends of her beautiful long tresses.

"Now, thought I, as I sat and smoked my pipe and watched my wife gracefully moving to and fro in our little cottage,—now, I am not ashamed that our greatest sheik should see how respectable and comfortable we look.

"By this time the autumn had fairly passed, and the consuls and gentlemen who had resorted to the mountains for the summer were hourly returning to their

town houses in Beyrout; for every cup of coffee and every pipe I furnished these, I was sure to receive a larger or smaller amount of baksheesh, so that by the time the winter had set in I was actually worth several hundred piastres in cash.

"Still I determined not to let this lie idle. I went to the neighbouring villages and purchased a stock of poultry, and having built them a compact and safe house, their keep cost me nothing. I let them out in the morning, and they strolled over the place with unrestrained liberty, always returning to their henroost by nightfall. In addition to the worms and grubs they picked up, every caravan of mules and every horse that passed by was sure to afford them a plentiful meal; the oats shaken out of the horse bags and what was spilt from sacks of grain affording them a sumptuous repast. My fowls grew fat and plump; every day in the henroost there was a plentiful supply of eggs, most of which, as well as the fowls themselves, I sold in the market at Beyrout, and when the setting season arrived, I had upwards of a dozen hens hatching as many eggs a-piece.

"I was now, so to say, a comparatively wealthy man, and I had serious ideas of going into partnership with the coffee-house keeper when an unexpected incident diverted my attention from this channel.

"By this time the stranger had been almost forgotten, or when thought of, only remembered with harshness and looked upon as a light and faithless

man who had trifled with the best feelings of others for his own sport and amusement.

"One night, however, just towards the end of winter, when the wind was blowing in mighty puffs down from the mountains, and the sky was obscured with stormy clouds, a stranger, drenched to the skin and weary with travelling, entered the coffee house, and divesting himself of his damp clothes revealed to me the never-to-be-forgotten face of that false friend. I immediately taxed him with his great insincerity, but he swore by his long white beard that not a week had elapsed in this interval which had not seen him interceding on our behalf. The mother had long since relapsed in her severity, and her heart yearned towards her long-absent daughter; but the father was stern and obstinate—*his daughter had married a beggar, and a beggar she should remain all her life.*

"I thought the best reply to make to this harsh exclamation was to take the stranger by the hand and introduce him into my own cottage; the appearance of comfort and even opulence seemed to surprise and gratify him beyond measure.

"That night he remained our guest; the fattest hens were served at his repast, the warmest bed placed at his disposal. Next morning he rose early, and mounting his horse, went back, as he had come, without even thanking us for our hospitality. '*There goes a base man!*' was my wife's exclamation; and I myself thought that he was unworthy to be called

a Druse. The very next day, however, a group of well-dressed horsemen approached from the mountains, and foremost amongst these rode my wife's father. Tears and supplications, and the miseries of poverty, had had no influence in changing his mulish determination; but no sooner had he learned from the stranger that we were living in comparative opulence, and that my wife had strings of gazis round her tarboosh, than his obdurate heart relented. 'That man,' said he, 'is worthy and fit to be called my son-in-law, and shall be fetched home with becoming dignity and honour.' With him, as with all the world, gold possessed an irresistible influence; the key to his affections, the touchstone to his heart, was a golden gazi; *il hamd'l Allah,* I had plenty of these, and so I was reclaimed.

"Next day we all came back to this village; in the course of years my children were born and sprung up like props around me. The old man lived out the years of his strength, and then he was buried by the side of his wife—may he rest in peace! All his possessions were inherited by me, because my wife was the only child that had outlived the old people.

"By degrees I added little by little to the inheritance. The old house crumbled away, and I built this new one. In putting up the door I fastened on a strong bolt, hoping always to shut it securely not only against winter winds and cold, but against the worst of all intruders, poverty and famine. At the same

time I made the door wide, so that it might open freely to all guests who honor me with their company, I care not of what creed or cast in life, or whether he be a sheik or a beggar. Many shadows have fallen across the threshold of that door as the weary have sought refreshment and repose, but none which have afforded me truer happiness and pleasure than that which now is reflected from your august person." Winding up with this burst of flowery rhetoric, our hospitable host starts up to his feet, and stretching all his limbs with weary lassitude, warns us with a yawn that the hour for repose has arrived.

CHAPTER VII.

NIGHT — PANORAMA OF THE PAST — ISRAEL IN LEBANON — THE BUILDERS OF THE TEMPLE—NEWS OF THE SAVIOUR—RUTHLESS INVADERS — THE DISCIPLES OF MAHOMET — THE CRUSADES — EARLY MORNING.

> Silence hath set her finger with soft touch
> Upon Creation's lip. Like a young mother, the moon
> Lifts up Night's curtains, and with a countenance mild
> Smiles on the beauteous Earth—her sleeping child.
>
> . . . .
> . . . .
>
> What noble actions spring to flowery prime,
> Spring from the seed Thought, sowed in such a time.
>
> ANONYMOUS.

WHAT a beautiful thing is night, when seen and felt upon the summits of Lebanon in the balmy month of June! the picture of the painter and the theme of the poet are here realised and even surpassed. Notwithstanding our weariness from yesterday's fatigues, we find the closeness within the closed hut one of the many obstacles to balmy sleep in Syria. But the family have long since been twenty fathoms deep in slumber, when, after turning and twisting in ineffectual search of sleep, we come to the conclusion of shifting

our positions and transporting our temporary beds out into the more congenial atmosphere of the yard in front of the house. Noiselessly and stealthily we undo the heavy latches of the door, so as not to break in upon the repose of the other inmates; yet the rusty old hinges grate discordantly, and the heavy old door groans again as it swings upon them.

It would require a greater disturbance than we occasion to arouse or waken up a native family in their first sleep; we accomplish our modern miracle without even interrupting one note in the bass sonorous concert of the snoring family, and, having accomplished this, we draw the door to, and seat ourselves upon our mattresses. All the sufferings of heat and want of sleep vanish under the magical influence of the wand of the spirit of the night; slumber has forsaken our eyelids, for one of nature's most serene and enchanting pictures is developed at this moment.

As we loll back on our cushions and gaze through the clear atmosphere of night up into the star-spangled firmament above us, the silvery moon seems perceptibly to glide over the glassy surface of the skies, emitting, as she sails along, refulgent beams of light which scatter themselves over the surface of the earth; not a cloud shrouds enviously the glimmering light of the countless stars in the milky way; and those other worlds, the planets, are lighted up with all the brilliancy of their own particular suns, whilst our earth is shrouded in night.

And what thoughts flock into the busy workhouse of memory as scenes of bygone centuries, revealed through pages of Holy Writ, flit across the brain and picture to the mind nations and people that have long since been numbered with things past! That very firmament, and moon, and stars, upon which we are now gazing, for forty years watched over the wanderings of the disobedient children of Israel as they encamped night after night in the wilderness. They too, like us, doubtless marvelled at the magnitude and splendour of the mighty works of creation; yet whilst the very manna fell like dew from heaven around them, murmuring against the unseen hand which guided and protected, and fed them in their desolate solitude,—so innate was ingratitude even in those early days, so deeply seated in the human mind.

Then earthquakes shake the earth, and the disobedient followers of Dathan and Abiram disappear beneath the yawning chasms of the earth that open and close over them; the trembling children of Israel tremble more as they witness this, and repent them of the evil. But these have long since been mingled with the dust, and the voice of their testimony has been hushed for centuries.

Yet there were other witnesses of this terrible visitation upon sin and wickedness. The surface of the earth may have been changed, rivers altered their course, mountains crumbled to dust, and the sea encroached or disappeared from the familiar haunts

of her waves; but the heavens and the stars, these still remain the same; the same moon cast her mantle of light over the very earth that covered the rebellious multitude, shining then as unclouded and serenely as she shines this night over Lebanon.

Then memory takes a leap through centuries of time; the track of the weary multitude upon the desert sands of the wilderness has been long since effaced by the winds of stormy seasons; the groves and the high places, and the altars of idolatry, have disappeared from the hills of Judea and Lebanon; the children of bondage have been led in safety into the land promised to their forefather Abraham, and the echo of the harp of Judah resounds from dell to dell. What sings the psalmist king as the chords revibrate to the song of faith?

> "The dawn of each returning day
> Fresh beams of knowledge brings,
> And from the dark returns of night
> Divine instruction springs."

The children of Israel dwelt amongst the Hivites upon this very Mount Lebanon.

Memory turns over another page in the history of past ages. The voice of the inspired psalmist is hushed in the cold sleep of death, but there blazes forth from his vacant seat on the throne of Israel the wisdom and the glory of Solomon.

Still does the song of Israel wake up echoes in these mountains,—still the mighty springs of water murmur

on pleasantly or leap in foaming cascades over precipice and mountain height,—still the same firmament, stars, and moon, are suspended like a splendid canopy of brilliants. But the intense silence that reigned here aforetime in the night season has been banished for awhile ; from the mountains resound the harsh voice of the axe and the groaning crash of heavy falling trees,—the loud cry of labourers inciting each other to labour,—the low moaning of heavily-burthened oxen,—the sound of timber being hewn and shaped, or the track of heavier beams upon the pathways of Lebanon; all these proclaim that the thousands of workmen sent by Solomon have set their shoulders to the wheel, and the work of the mighty temple is progressing rapidly.

Night and day, day and night, busy gangs are scattered over every accessible part of Lebanon; the beauty and the pride of centuries are levelled with the earth, and the cedars of ancient growth are hewn down and borne away to Jerusalem. Then the night watch of overseers and head clerks sat often as we now sit, urging the men to labour, else praising to one another the clear unclouded moonlight which helped to further the progress of the work.

Silence once again reigns upon the Lebanon; the noisy bustling crew have lived to see their labour accomplished; the temple has risen in glory and fame, and been swept away again by the ruthless hand of time; the sun of Israel has set, and the morning

star of Christianity risen over the summits of the snow-capped mountains.

Strange men, who were travellers and pilgrims amongst those hills, came, and told the natives stranger tales of what things had been said and done at Jerusalem; how the wise men had come out of the far east, led by a brilliant star, to the lowly manger;—how Herod had persecuted and slain the innocents;—how ignorant men were suddenly endowed with the gifts of eloquence and language;—how the Jews, in angry multitudes, had risen up and oppressed and beaten dauntless men, whose faith endowed them with more courage than the lion;—how they had smitten some, imprisoned some, and banished others, yet still how perseveringly the same men came back again, and preached the same doctrine; and how marvellously men born blind had been made to see, the maimed and the cripple made whole, the children of corruption brought forth from the recesses of the grave with life and health; how, finally, the governors and high priests had leagued together and crucified that man, whose only deeds were mercy; and how the face of all nature, revolting at their base ingratitude, turned mysteriously dark for the space of several hours, whilst—

> Mountains labour'd and groan'd with pain,
> And the veil of the temple was rent in twain.

These, and many other marvellous truths, did the pilgrim and stranger pour into the listening ears of the

people that then dwelt on Lebanon; and some believed, and some mocked at them as idle tales, whilst time steadily turned the globe, and generation was numbered after generation.

Rank weeds sprang up and stifled what good seeds these early pilgrims had scattered, and the gilded head of idolatry was reared above the mountain-tops. Still the moon, like a careful mother, watched over the slumberers on Lebanon,—still the dew copiously refreshed the earth, and the canopy of heaven was still the same resplendent firmament of stars.

Ages rolled by; the shadow from that cross where the good Man had been crucified fell, like a refulgent stream of light, over the waters of the Mediterranean, and far into the lands of the west; yet still where the cross itself was planted ignorance and superstition prevailed—impenetrable darkness clothed the earth.

Suddenly the quiet and repose of the villages in Lebanon was broken in upon by frightened fugitives, who, flying from the plains below, sought shelter in the inaccessible heights.

These people brought up with them terrible tales of murder and cruelty and bloodshed; telling how wild men, swarming like locusts upon the earth, had risen suddenly, like a cloud not bigger than a hand, in the distant east, and nearing the confines of Palestine, had burst, like a terrible hurricane, over the land.

Every city, and town, and village, had been ravished by these ruthless invaders, their sabres sharp and

besmeared with innocent gore; their creed destruction and extermination to all that professed not a like faith with themselves.

The disciples of Mahomet had overcome the land,—the cross was trampled down,—the Koran and the crescent preached to all tribes,—and the same moon looking down with placid beam beheld, reflected in her rays, a gaudy mockery of her younger self.

Banners with crescent moons, and lofty minarets topped with gilded emblems of the same, reared themselves in plains and upon mountains, and overtopped the stateliest trees.

Then the descendants of the Hivites, who had been permitted to dwell with the Jews on Lebanon, whose faith had wavered between idolatry and the law of Moses—between the law and the Gospels—now wavered again between the faith of a Christian and the new-fangled creed of Mahomet.

No man could read the secrets of their hearts, but in outer forms they bowed and conceded to such as might chance to be the lords of the land. Great was the fame of the caliphs and descendants of Mahomet; the Moslem's prayer echoed musically, but profanely, from mountain to mountain in the Lebanon, but her children heeded not the music, nor cared for the echo. Wrapped in superstitious idolatry, and worshipping in secret caverns and in solitude a being created primate of their faith by the legends and tales of their ancestors, out of the many faiths that had been preached

upon those mountains, they had gleaned together fragments and odds and ends. Adding to these their own original legends and superstitions, they constituted a creed entirely their own, from which source, most probably, the present race of Druses derive all their notions or knowledge of religion.

Again the cycles of time revolve: sturdy warriors, clad in armour, the sons of Western Europe, scramble up the mountain heights, and mingling, fraternise with the children of Lebanon. Their crosses and their rosaries proclaim them crusaders,—heroes of valiant heart, and stout in faith, who, charmed by the phrenzied eloquence of men like Peter the Hermit, have left wealth, and home, and affection, and comfort, behind them, to combat with the usurper who has trampled upon the cross, and to drive them from the land they polluted.

But the fulness of time for so great a victory had not then arrived; reverses and misfortunes, death, by slaughter and by pestilence, fearfully thinned their ranks, till the only home left them in the land of their pilgrimage, was here, amongst the sons of the Lebanon. That same moon and stars at which we now lie gazing, shone mildly over the graves of three hundred thousand chivalrous men, the flower of all Europe's armies.

The bubble of fanaticism had burst and collapsed in the west, and the victims of the fanatic Peter had bitten the dust in Palestine; those few that sur-

vived are supposed to have intermarried with, and dwelt among, the people of the Lebanon. Even of very recent years records have turned up,—papers with the names and armorial bearings of some of the most aristocratic families in France;—but the enigma must ever remain unsolved as to whether or not the people in whose hands these relics were found are really descended from, or scions of, the same noble stock.

So the night speeds on, in wakeful yet dreamy solitude; the reality of the present is clearly defined upon the mountains by the villages and gardens of its present occupants. Presently the low booming sound of the Maronite priest, summoning his flock to early prayers, assures us that even at the present hour men live here who call themselves Christians, whilst we have indisputable proofs of the existence of heathens and idolators around us. The hour has not yet arrived, though let us hope it is not far distant, when the brighter morning star shall shine over the mountains of Lebanon, and extinguish in its more brilliant light the dim flickerings of superstition and ignorance.

During all this reverie, the intense solitude of night has only been occasionally broken in upon by the discordant howlings of hungry troops of jackals, or the plaintive and melancholy note of the night owl, howling its dismal song from the darker recesses of the mountain. Thousands of crickets take up their morning hymn, and chaunt out loudly and merrily from their

houses in the bark of the pine tree. The tinkling of an occasional muleteer's bell warns us that industrious man is already on the alert; the flocks of goats are bleating impatiently for the first streak of morning; the light of the moon grows languid; the stars glimmer feebler and feebler. The night is passed; the morning wakes up in the east, and the heavy dew falls, saturating the grateful earth.

Arise! and let us go hence.

CHAPTER VIII.

DRUSE HOUSEWIFE — DOMESTIC PREPARATIONS — SCARCITY OF MEAT — REMARKABLE PHENOMENA — PETRIFACTIONS — CONVENT AT KARKAFÉ — STORY RELATIVE TO THE COOK — RECREATION OF THE MONKS — THE MONKS OF KARKAFÉ — THE DINING ROOM — BREAD ROOM AND STOREHOUSE — THE LAST RESTING PLACE.

Rise up and mak a clean fireside,
  Put on the mickle pot;
  . . . . .
There are twa hens upon the bank,
  Have fed this month and mair,
Mak haste, and thraw their necks about,
  That Colin weel may fare.

BURNS.

THE Druses, in common with all other sects inhabiting the East, are an early and industrious people; the first light of morning warns the good man of the house, at all seasons of the year, and in any weather, (health permitting,) to jump up from his couch, and thoroughly arouse himself for the day's work before him. At the same time his wife is equally industrious, and she has many domestic matters which require her care and attention, and which must be all settled before the children awake and interfere with her occupation. The Druse comes forth, and at the nearest fountain goes through his early ablutions; after this he sits awhile, generally upon the grind-

stone, in the yard in front of his house, and then indulges in a pipe.

Meanwhile his wife has hurriedly prepared for him his early breakfast, for our Druse is a labourer, and his duties require speedy attendance at the field. What was left from yesterday evening's repast, with a few loaves and a bit of cheese or so, constitute this meal; his wife seldom joins him in this repast, because, in the first instance, she has not to undergo that fatigue and manual labour to which her husband is exposed, and which absolutely require support; and then she cannot find time till all household affairs are settled to sit down and think about her appetite.

Whilst the husband is at his meal, the wife goes and supplies the oxen with provender; she gives the horse his corn, she unpens the goats and the poultry, and having scattered a little barley for these latter, she helps the shepherds in milking the goats; and then runs back to the house again. By this time the husband has shouldered his plough, and driven off the oxen to the field of his labour, where, with little intermission, he will toil till close upon mid-day, enlivening the hours with an occasional wild song or by a screaming conversation, carried on with other ploughmen similarly occupied in adjacent fields. Every now and then, when the heat is very oppressive indeed, he will sit down and repose for a few moments upon the shaft of his plough; and then his eldest son, who assists him as far as his strength permits, fills and lights

a pipe for him, having tinder and steel and flint always at hand.

In this interval, the wife has rolled up the mattresses and stowed them away for the day; she then sprinkles the floor over with water, and carefully sweeps the house and the front yard. This done she lights a fire, and setting thereon a huge cauldron of water, she wakes up the children and makes them breakfast sumptuously; for in their opinion, unless children eat immensely they can never thrive or remain healthy. After breakfast the warm water is brought into play, the faces and the hands of the children are purified, and with what remains she washes and scours up all the plates and cooking utensils; this done she begins to think about her own personal appearance, tidies up her hair and her dress as well as time and her limited wardrobe will permit, and if there is any little washing to be done, she takes this in hand and goes through it at once. Then comes the consideration of what they are to have for dinner. Going into the little garden behind the house, she plucks a few love apples, or any other vegetable that may chance to be in season; then she hunts up the henroost for new-laid eggs; and these, in addition to the goat's milk, the cheese, and the burghol already alluded to, constitute the ingredients ordinarily cooked for their mid-day meal. As, however, there are guests in the house, something additional is requisite for hospitality's sake; so the eldest daughter is

sent away hurriedly to her father in the field, to get some money from him to buy meat with, should it so chance that any sheep, or goat, or ox, has been slaughtered within three miles of the place. But if, as is very often the case, no meat is to be had either for love or money, then they are compelled to have recourse to the poultry; in any way, rely upon it, the careful housewife will manage to prepare against mid-day, a very unexceptionable meal; so that having this pleasant certainty in perspective, we indulge in a cup of coffee and a pipe, and then we take a stroll in the neighbourhood.

Passing under the hill, where stands the palace of the Emir on whom we called yesterday evening, we continue along the base of the valley till we arrive at one of the stone reservoirs which supplies the mill that we noticed; and walking over the ledge of this, we scramble up the mountain side, and come to the foot of the desolate hill, where flocks of goats were last evening reposing. Here we find a beaten pathway which winds round the base of the hill, and whilst pursuing it we walk along the brink of a deep ravine now full of sand and pebbles, like the dry bed of a river, but which in the winter is a foaming torrent of water fed by the overflowing of the several reservoirs.

Following this tract, we arrive at the *ain* or open fissure where the water of the spring, after travelling some distance underground, pours forth into the light of day. Put your hand in, and though the heat of the

sun is so intense that our walk has thrown us into a profuse perspiration, you instantly draw out your fingers again benumbed and almost congealed with cold. This is one of those great luxuries to be enjoyed in a climate like Syria. The peasant who has such a spring to resort to when thirsty and hot, spurns all those artificial luxuries which constitute the enjoyments of civilised life.

Near this ain we find several large troughs hewn out of massive stones, and which it is the business of the women of the village to fill, so that the shepherds may the more conveniently water their flocks here.

A high road leading from this spring conducts us to one of the most remarkable phenomena to be met with in the country of the Druses. Keeping to the left side of the road, we perceive still to our left an ordinary looking hill, at the foot of which are cultivated grape vines and figs. There is nothing in the appearance of the place that would rivet the attention of even the most industrious antiquarian, for the surface of the hill presents simply a barren rocky ground.

Keeping by the hill, however, but still pursuing the high road, we commence scrambling up the sides; and when we have arrived at an elevation of about twenty feet from the road, then our astonishment is only equal to our gratification at the discovery we make. The whole surface of the hill is one mass of valuable and extraordinary petrifaction, well worthy the investigation of all travellers in these regions. If ever

there was a spot that seemed to bear upon it a stamp of having been submersed under the ocean, most assuredly that spot is here met with. Closely packed together, yet in very capital condition, are multifarious shells and matter resembling sea weed, all in a perfect state of petrifaction, and which have apparently remained in this condition through centuries and ages of time.

We do not pretend to penetrate deeply into the study of natural philosophy. The theories of Cuvier and other great naturalists teach men, as far as human instruction is admissible, to reckon the ages of the earth by the various layers and incrustations; but if ever there was a convincing testimony of the universal effects of the deluge, that testimony is here revealed, —at least we are simple enough ourselves to receive it as such, and as such it must remain until some wiser man shall have satisfactorily accounted for so singular a phenomenon.*

* When I visited this mountain in 1851, the Greek priest Padre Salamouni, from the convent at Karkafé, who acted as my guide, and who is an extremely shrewd and intelligent man, assured me that I was the first European that had visited this spot, since the year 1820. Then an old Austrian traveller is said to have examined this hill, but as the priest had forgotten his name I was never able to obtain any clue as to the identity of the traveller, or as to whether or not he ever published the result of his investigation. I took care to provide myself with specimens from this mass of petrifaction, which I have brought to this country with me, and which have been much admired by antiquarians. Specimens of a few of the prevailing features I have presented to the Museum of the India House, and the honorable the Court of Directors have politely thanked me for the same.

Clambering right over this hill of curiosities, and gathering rare specimens as we go along, we descend on the opposite side into a well-cultivated vineyard, which being plentifully besprinkled with Greek priests, helping themselves to delicious clusters of grapes, leads us to suppose that the vineyard is the property of a convent; nor are we mistaken, for here comes a familiar face, Padre Giovanni Muana Salamouni, one of the monks of Karkafé, who having known us for some years, invites us to the convent to refresh ourselves and repose awhile.

Above ten minutes' walk brings us to the convent; first, however, we come to a large open square, at a considerable elevation, on one side of which grow two stately wild oaks, and the entrance to which is grotesquely guarded by Abouna Buttros, a friendly old priest, seated tailor-fashion on a large piece of rock, enjoying his afternoon pipe. The shade afforded by the two trees is usually the resort of others.

At the further end of this opening stands the church of the convent, and, near the church, the convent itself,—an old heavy-looking building, walled in on all sides, and well adapted to be the dwelling place of an anchorite. A small entrance door ushers us into a good sized yard, well paved all round, and supported upon numerous arches. In the centre is a dry fountain long since out of use. A sour pomegranate tree, of that peculiar species that never yields sweet fruit, and a few aromatic herbs, grow in this

yard; but with this exception, it is an utter desolation, surrounded by the lofty and sombre-looking walls of the building. Around us are the separate cells of the various monks, including the kitchen, the dining room, the storehouse, and the rooms devoted to making wine, oil, etc. All the fraternity labour for each other's mutual support; thus some are cooks, some cultivate the ground, some make the wine, others extract the oil, and so on throughout the whole chapter.

Our friend, Padre Salamouni, tells us a strange story relative to the cook of the establishment, who is, as we very speedily discover, as deaf as a post; so deaf that he cannot hear what he articulates himself, and consequently is wholly unable to express himself in any intelligible language. It would appear that during one of those unhappily frequent disturbances which occur between the Christians and the Druses, and which in our opinion are too often instigated by the selfish intrigues of busybodies, this unhappy deaf man, who was in the perfect possession of both hearing and speech, was one day suddenly startled by somebody firing off a pistol close to his ear, which so injured the tympanum that from that moment his power of hearing was lost, and even his very intellect seemed to have been shaken; notwithstanding all this, however, he is a most useful member of the community, witness the goodly dinners so hospitably set before travellers and strangers.

At either end of the yard is a small door, the one

conducting us to a well and some outhouses; here the yard is well paved, and there is a basin and ewer, with soap, always at hand for the use of the inmates. Through the other door we pass into a garden-yard; perhaps this yard may be said to comprise the whole of the small stock of amusement and recreation allotted to these simple men upon earth. Herein, with childish simplicity, they have each their small plot of garden, where grow flowers and a fruit tree or two, reared from seed, and tended with all the watchful tenderness that a mother might lavish upon her offspring.

Plants have sprung up and rewarded their nurturing care with the most odoriferous flowers; fruit trees have arrived at maturity, and recompense their labour and skill by plentiful and delicious crops; and perhaps no mortal beings ever tasted of such unalloyed happiness as these monks have experienced in culling their own flowers or gathering their own fruits, either to decorate some favourite altar, or else as a free-will offering to friends and strangers who have partaken of their hospitality.

Some spots there are in this convent yard still carefully tended and watched over by the surviving brethren, but which were originally the solace of others who have finished their pilgrimage upon earth; a flourishing memento of the brotherly tie which unites these simple men together. Here, in the hour of recreation or leisure, the monks assemble, and seated under the shade of their respective trees, enjoy

friendly converse, smoking the pipe of peace, and often indulging in their favourite game of drafts. Too poor and too indigent are these good men to indulge in costly draft-boards, but they have a ready remedy at hand ; the well-paved floor is chalked over in every direction with representations of the chequered pattern of the draft-board, their draftsmen are small pebbles, and with this material they enter keenly into the relish of the game.

When one or two of the brethren undertake a journey to Beyrout, or some of the neighbouring towns or villages, for purposes connected with the welfare of the convent, returning, they become the lions of the day.

Seated in this yard, and surrounded by the hermits, they recount with marvellous punctuality, all that they have seen or heard during their recent trip; the marvellous steamers at Beyrout, the equally marvellous palaces that the Europeans have built themselves, the din and the clamour of the trade, the price of provisions, and in what health they found and left individual friends and acquaintances,—these are an exciting theme of conversation, an endless source of questions and answers; and when all have been satisfied and everything related and commented upon, then the brethren retire into the solitude of their respective cells and shut out the pomps and vanities of this world, in silent outpourings of the soul.

They are a good, kindly, harmless people,—hos-

pitable to the stranger, considerate for the wants of the poor and destitute; and as they might be in a thousand different ways worse employed, the least we can say is to wish them peace and quiet in their noiseless pilgrimage through life.

After having visited all these parts of the convent and gone into one or two of the cells, which are kept in admirable order, and where each monk has his little private supply of fruit, sugar, wine, etc., kept especially to treat visitors with, we are warned that the dinner hour of the brethren is close at hand by the loud ringing of the convent bell, which wakes up echoes far and wide; five minutes afterwards we are ushered into the dining room, which consists of one long apartment adjoining the kitchen, and where all the monks of the establishment are now assembled.

The *padre presidente*, or chief monk, takes up his position at the head of a long narrow table, down either side of which the other monks and guests and strangers are ranged; the chief of the establishment implores a blessing, and then the dinner is served. During Lent their repasts are restricted to olives, oil, fruits, bread, and boiled wheat or rice, besides an infinity of vegetables, either fried in oil or used in salads. At other seasons the monks live well, supplying themselves with meat or poultry from their own resources. One grand article of consumption during Lent is the *bakala*, a species of dried salt fish brought to Beyrout by European vessels.

At one extremity of the dining apartment is a room exclusively set aside for the supply of bread, which is only baked once a month during winter, and once a fortnight in the summer. In looking in we perceive the floor heaped up with these loaves, which resemble in size and shape an ordinary saucer, and serve as a capital substitute for spoons in dipping into soups or gravies.

Beyond the bread room again is the grand storehouse of the establishment; in this, methodically arranged, are huge jars of oil, butter, wine, olives, pickles, dibs, honey, etc., baskets full of rice and lentils, huge sacks full of wheat, mountains of onions, pyramids of figs, dried fruit and nuts, festoons of dried herbs and red chilies, and amongst all these, licensed to roam at large, two or three sleek-looking cats, which keep the place clear of mice and rats. When this room has been stocked for the year, then the monks, closing their massive outer door against the cold and storms of winter, set at nought all fears of suffering or want; the centre yard is piled up high with dry faggots collected from the mountains, and lighting a roaring fire from these, they gather around and make themselves cheerful and happy, whilst nature outside looks bleak and dreary, and the snow falls heavily upon the ground.

Bidding our hospitable friends farewell, we return as we came, just hesitating for a few minutes to contemplate a cavern to the mouth of which massive stones

are rolled. These stones, our friend informs us, are only rolled away when any of the brethren of the convent die; the remains are then brought thither and deposited on a shelf in this vault, which runs exactly under the church, the stones are then rolled back again to the mouth of the cave, and so, as casualties occur, men come and roll these massive stones backwards and forwards. But our friend, the priest, assures us that they all live and die in the hope that when time has finished its course, then brighter than men will stand at the entrance of that cave and rouse the long slumbering occupants to an eternal dawn.

CHAPTER IX.

RETURN TO THE DRUSE'S HOUSE—DRUSE WOMEN—THEIR ACQUIREMENTS—METAPHOR—THE RESULT—HAREMS OF THE EAST—AN ACCOMPLISHED FASHIONABLE—WINDOWS OF THE MIND—LIONS OF SOCIETY—THE ENGLISH NATION—THE QUEEN.

. . . . to paint the lily,
To throw a perfume on the violet,
. . . . or add another hue
Unto the rainbow, ...
. . . . . .
Is wasteful and ridiculous excess.
SHAKESPEARE.

By the time we get back to the Druse's house, having loitered so long with the monks, the hour of their usual mid-day repast is over, and they are waiting in hungry expectation for our arrival; for the Druse is too hospitable to allow himself or any of his family to satisfy their hunger before all the guests are assembled.

You will recollect that we left the Druse's house this morning under the firm conviction that we should not want for the good things of this life; this conviction is now verified, and the repast spread before us

would feed five times as many hungry persons as now sit down to it.

After the mid-day repast it is usual with the master of the house to indulge in an hour's *siesta*, which he does with the doors of his hut closed so as to expel light, as also to keep away the swarms of annoying flies which would otherwise set repose at defiance.

Whilst the master of the house is asleep, the wife and daughter wash up the cooking utensils and put these by till evening; the children go forth on various errands of amusement, else fall asleep under the shade of the nearest tree. The wife has minor duties to attend to in the village, so she leaves us alone with the eldest daughter, who is a buxom lass of between sixteen and seventeen, and who, sitting down near us, enters into conversation without the least restraint or affectation. This fact alone proves that the Druses are not that jealous people they are sometimes represented to be, nor are their women such slaves to the prevailing Mahometan custom in Syria of excluding their sex from the companionship of men; this rigid law has only effect in the intercourse of the Druses with each other, or with the Turks, and this fact also proves that they have greater confidence in the good faith and honour of Christians and strangers than they can place upon their own fraternity.

If we may judge by the sample before us, the Druse women are not one whit behind their sisters in more civilised countries as far as regards natural sharpness

of intellect, and even wit; they possess, beyond a doubt, the rough unpolished matter which when worked up would constitute what is styled elegance and manners,—a perfect illustration of the aptitude of that ancient proverb which says, that the roughest surface often contains within it the greatest mineral wealth.

Somehow or other, the Druses, in common with all classes inhabiting Syria, are born with a natural tendency to politeness and etiquette. This is more particularly the case with the women; the wildest mountain girl possesses a refinement of manners, an elegance of deportment, and a delicacy of speech, which one might seek for in vain amongst a similar class in England and France. That heavy awkward gesture and speech so familiar to clodhoppers, and which so immediately stamps the creature with the class he belongs to, is never to be met with in the East.

Here the only perceptible difference between a princess and a peasant's daughter is in the costume. Take for instance, the Druse's daughter, now seated in familiar converse by our side; she has never received even the rudiments of education,—she knows books only by their name; she has heard of learned men who could actually write a whole letter, and her knowledge of geography extends to about five miles round the village where she was born; her acquirements in natural history may be summed up in goats, oxen, poultry, sparrows, hawks, jackals, owls, donkeys,

cats, dogs, and an occasional hedgehog. Tell her about fishes any bigger than tadpoles, and she will immediately imagine that they were all *whales*, and consequently difficult to swallow; tell her of birds bright in plumage and sweet in song, which never stir from their hot retreats in India and Africa, and she will retail such information as a capital fable to her younger brother, who is just cutting his teeth.

Speak to her of flowers, fruits, and vegetables, multifarious as they are delicious in taste and smell, and nourishing to the body; her power of comprehension is too limited to expand and embrace so vast a field of contemplation. She imagines that you are kindly endeavouring to amuse her with tales and stories, but she cannot for an instant identify the reality with the description. And, worst of all, if you hazarded a narrative combining all the marvels of science, talking about steamboats and railways, ships and balloons, crystal palaces and cathedrals, then she would set you down as a *magnoon*—a babbler of incoherent nonsense; for even her father, and her grandfather before him, had never talked of suchlike absurdities. Besides which, her notions of a palace are circumscribed, and the mud and stone building of the Emir M'rad is in her conception the *acmé* of architectural science.

It is therefore worse than useless to attempt to describe anything, however simple, to an illiterate mind, which cannot distinguish between B and a bull's

foot. When education has taken the rough uneven matter in hand, and gradually refined and polished it, then, as the dawn of knowledge opens upon the mind, so in exact proportion the mind itself expands and becomes more capable of embracing and cherishing the rays of knowledge.

We cannot in the language of metaphor give a more beautiful example of the intellect of a Druse village maiden than by comparing it to an unblown rosebud; if the stem upon which it flourishes be conveniently planted where the heat of day and the dew of night refresh and invigorate the plant, then it will in due time expand, blow, and come to perfection. As the sun, gradually gathering strength, ascends in the horizon, so the rosebud under its congenial influence rapidly opens, developing itself a beautiful flower full of the richest incense. But if this same plant had sprung up in some secluded dell where the light barely penetrated, and both heat and cold were uncongenial, then the bud might arrive at maturity, but the richness of its odour and the beauty of its tint would have evaporated before the flower arrived at perfection, and the flower itself be a faded sickly specimen.

Just so in the Druse girl, now budding into all the beauty of mature womanhood ; there is that lurking behind her brilliant eyes which tells us clearly and unmistakeably of latent talent. With her, as in the rosebud, the essence and the beauty of colour are yet

undeveloped, they are closely entwined within the thick shrouding leaves of ignorance, and in her present position the atmosphere is uncongenial to the furtherance of her intellect, and no sun of knowledge has ever shone in through the tangled ignorance that surrounds her.

The result is, that all the intrinsic worth and talent must exude almost imperceptibly, and by the time the flower is full blown, the woman arrived at maturity, then the sap and the essence will have evaporated, the dormant talents have been stifled, and only that remain about the flower which is just barely sufficient to classify it in its proper genus; she will remain a woman and a human being all the days of her life, one stage removed from the brute creation, still vastly lower than cultivated and civilised beings in understanding and even in the dictates of the heart's affections.

Take this girl however as she stands, or rather as she sits, beside us, divest her of her present costume, decorate her with jewels and ornaments, clothe her with silks and satins, and place her in the harem of the grand signior. She will experience no inconvenience, suffer no awkwardness by the sudden transposition; on the contrary, her natural airs and graces would lend fresh splendour to her gaudious attire, and her movements and actions would be ease personified. In this respect, she would be the equal of the finest princess in the land, and a few days' initia-

tion would make her competent of comprehending the enjoyments or sufferings of her position, and her intellect would expand just so far as would permit of her seeing and understanding everything around her. With regard to education, all the women in the harems of the East are on a par with herself, she is in every other respect perfectly their equal.

How would this transfer stand good in any part of civilised Europe? Take the most angelic face and a form of most exquisite symmetry; transfer her from the lowly cot of her peasant father, and having duly invested her in fashionable attire, introduce her in the height of the season at my Lady Fiddlefaddle's ball! and the picture conjured up is the most pitiable and heartrending conceivable. Not one single word, action, or movement, but what could call down criticism and contempt. The very air of aristocracy would be polluted by her presence, and none would feel more keenly the absurdity of her position than the poor girl herself, who in her own sphere of life may perhaps be possessed of every praiseworthy virtue.

Here again the line of distinction between girls of this class in Europe and in the East is immeasurably wide. This same Druse girl, whose notions of everything are so limited, and who in all probability does not possess one-tenth of the learning and understanding of even the peasant's daughter, who may have been taught to read and write, and is in every respect

an accomplished housewife,—this Druse girl might flutter and tremble a little at her first introduction into the blaze of fashion and etiquette; yet, believe me, five minutes would not elapse before she would be perfectly herself again, and feel as completely at home as she does now seated in her father's court-yard. Nay more than this; her natural airs of elegance are such, her refinement of feeling so great, that the first belle of the season might even suffer a twinge of jealousy at the bewitching manners and courtesy of this wild maid of the Lebanon.

And should it so happen, that my Lady Fiddlefaddle were to take a liking to the Druse, and condescend to make her her *protégée*, undertake to initiate the Lebanon maid into the minutiæ of aristocratic etiquette, acting as her chaperon and friend upon all occasions, then, rely upon it, one month's tuition will see our Druse girl an accomplished fashionable, eschewing cheese and onions, and other unheard-of abominations, familiar to her in her native country,—fainting at the very mention of garlic, which she is exceedingly fond of in her natural state,—and, in short, coming out a finished young lady, full of all the bewitching charms and elegant deportment of her instructress, adding to this the delightful *naïve* style of her wild mountain sisterhood, and ultimately causing heartburns and jealousies without number, even cutting out Lady Fiddlefaddle herself amongst the most recherché beaux.

With the Druse girl the eyes are literally the windows of the mind, reflecting on her understanding everything she looks upon with an indelible stamp; she has only to see to comprehend. Immediately and so soon as the light of knowledge begins to penetrate through these windows of the mind, dormant energy and talent, which are lying fast asleep within, wake up and bestir themselves, getting so active at last that they are perpetually peeping out for the purpose of gleaning information.

Now all this may be set down by the reader as an exaggerated picture, drawn by an over-fervid imagination; but the result of such a trial, should it ever be put to the test, would rather exceed than fall short of the imaginary speculation. Men from these very parts, possessed of one-tenth the ordinary intellect of the women, have by the merest chance and hazard, been flung into the very vortex of fashionable society. Their picturesque costumes, their beards and moustache, and their naturally free and easy manners, have at once stamped them amongst untravelled denizens, as aristocrats and princes of a lineal descent.

Their own insufficiency and naturally-retiring disposition have, in some instances, shrunk with terror from the honors heaped them; in others, there has not been so honest a display of bashfulness. But in either case it has suited the humour and inclination of lion hunters; and the man of unpretending

pedigree, whose juvenile ambition in his fatherland was to arrive at years of maturity, that he might take charge of his father's caravans of mules and donkeys, has been suddenly, much to his astonishment, transformed into some incognito,—a learned prince, or descendant of the sheiks,—and been perfectly overwhelmed with civilities and titles.

To secure the prince's attendance at a ball or a dinner party, to make him one of the party at the opera, to solicit his honoring some venerable society by becoming a member or an associate, to confer upon him diplomas and degrees,—these have been a source of contention amidst the distinguished and learned of civilised lands. Even the very Lord Mayor himself, in his state carriage, might be proud to have such a lion rampant upon his coach-box. Yet, to the honor of their discretion and natural intellect be it said, these subjects of fortune's frolics escaped being put into Hanwell or Bedlam, which is saying a very great deal indeed for the force of their moral intellect.

Few men in Europe, suddenly transferred from similar spheres, could resist the intoxicating influence of so great honors and so much civility; neither in their intercourse with their superiors in birth, education, and talent, could these have refrained from breaking out into flagrant vices, and showing at once the truth of the proverb which says: "What is bred in the bone will not come out of the flesh." That

these lions of fashionable society passed through the ordeal unscathed, and even with honor and credit to themselves, is only the more flattering to all classes and natives inhabiting the East, and is a convincing proof of the feasibility of the problem respecting the Druse girl; for most assuredly some of them were of the lowest Syrian origin, yet in their every-day intercourse with polished and educated men they neither said nor did anything contrary to what is supposed to constitute a gentleman.

Whilst our imagination has been flitting over so large a field, and even gone uninvited to my Lady Fiddlefaddle's ball, the beautiful theme which gave rise to these vagaries has been patiently and demurely seated by our side. The Druse father has accomplished his hour's siesta, and comes forth invigorated, ready to smoke one pipe and have a little chat with us before returning to his labour.

He asks us with an incredible air whether it is really a fact that the English people are governed by a lady, and his daughter turns aside her head listening attentively for our answer. When we tell the old Druse that the English nation are proud of and glory in the wisdom and excellence of their Queen, he is struck dumb with astonishment; he cannot conceive how any woman, in all the long catalogue from Eve downwards, could be capable of managing the affairs of government, of holding the tiller of the vessel of state; and when we tell him that our Queen is

learned in language and science, and is as deeply read as any man in the kingdom, then the Druse thinks it high time to be off. "Allah, Allah!" he says, "what will the world come to, when women have the supremacy over man?"

The daughter, on the contrary, seems delighted with the notion, as she takes our hand and shakes it fervently, exclaiming with all the pathos of feeling, "How happy your women must be!"—another proof that she would shine like a star resplendent, if cultured on a congenial soil, and ushered into society under the patronage of my Lady Fiddlefaddle.

CHAPTER X.

SINGULAR PHENOMENON—A STURDY MESSENGER—HAMMOOD'S SONG ORIENTAL VERSE — OLD ENGLISH DITTY — THE HOSPITABLE HIGHLANDER — PAMPHLETS AND NEWSPAPERS — INCIDENTS OF LONG-PAST YEARS — THE "TIMES" NEWSPAPER — "PUNCH" ON MOUNT LEBANON—A SILK FACTORY — EUROPEAN MACHINERY — PROFITABLE CHANCE—ARTIFICIAL PRECIPICE—DEPARTURE FROM THE FACTORY.

> How carols now the lusty muleteer?
> Of love, romance, devotion is his lay,
> As whilome he was wont the leagues to cheer,
> His quick bells wildly jingling on the way.
>
> CHILDE HAROLD.

THE afternoon breeze is whistling merrily through the leafy boughs and over mountain-top as we rise up from our prolonged reverie and conversation. The Druse's daughter is called away by manifold household duties, and the whole village awakes to the bustle and activity of life from the drowsy lethargy of the hours devoted to the *siesta*.

We mount our nags and ride away in uncertain search of novelty and amusement. One thing is certain, that wherever our horses choose to lead us there will be abundance of food for the imagination, for every turning reveals fresh pictures and wild moun-

tain scenery, and there is no spot amongst the hills that is not worthy of more than passing observation.

All around, and echoed from bush to bush, is the perpetual note of the merry cricket, and the sweeter song of feathered warblers; then again wild flowers and strange but little-known plants surround us on every side, whilst the mineralogist, as well as the botanist, has only to stoop as he passes along to gather the rarest specimens of each peculiar science.

Amongst other things, constituting a singular phenomenon in themselves, we pass several petrified substances, which at first present no prepossessing or attractive appearance, but which, on being cleared of the dust and earth with which they are incrusted, present to us a perfect ball of a size similar to that of a cricket ball. Take up one of these and fling it with all your force against the nearest rock, it is shattered into atoms, being extremely fragile, but these separate atoms glitter like diamonds, and consist of innumerable sharp-pointed flakes of what may have probably been water frozen or incrustations of snow. The substance however, is in its present condition as hard and as brittle as crystal.

Soon after emerging upon one of the high roads of the mountain, we encounter a hot and dusty messenger coming from Beyrout and carrying letters and parcels for a gentleman who has a silk-reeling factory distant about two hours' ride from this spot, and erected at a village of some note. Hammood, for so is the trusty

messenger called, is an old acquaintance of our own, and as we have nothing better to do, and nowhere in particular to go, we accede to his proposal of accompanying him to the factory in question.

Delighted at the prospect of having such eligible company to beguile his tedious *trajet*, the sturdy messenger rides on before us with renewed energies, never stopping, but pointing out, as he passes on, the most striking features of the surrounding landscape; hooting after frightened jackals as they start away from their lairs, firing pistols at partridges that are far beyond the reach of danger, and waking up echoes with his snatches of Syrian love songs, as he carefully guides his steed over the intricate and sometimes slippery mountain path.

In his own estimation this messenger is a renowned personage; he has been nearly twenty years in the service of Franks, and on the strength of this considers himself almost a naturalised Frank. It would take a large slate and wear away a good slate pencil, to note down in round numbers the times he has gone backwards and forwards between Beyrout and this factory; and goodly volumes of romance and chivalry might be indited from his tale of exploits and adventures.

Expert in drawing the long bow and fertile of imagination, marvellous indeed are the exploits that he records of his own prowess, and wonderful the hairbreadth escapes he has had. Were we strangers, in lieu of being well acquainted with these parts, we

might be led to believe that a band of ruthless ruffians infested these localities, in place of the peaceful Druses and Maronites. Having our own convictions, however, we trot along contentedly after our garrulous guide, only laughing at his incidents or adventure; or imploring him to cease that wretched screaming, when he indulges us with a specimen of his vocal powers.

La tidrubné f'll cobcab,
Aman, g'hanem!
La tidrubné f'll taboot,
Wallà, billà!
Ana dosté il arnaout
Amàn, Amàn!
A'kshàn ghel, saba ghel,
Shindì ghel, herghûn ghel,
Ya ganem ghel!

Thus lustily, and with stentorian lungs, shouts our indefatigable guide, as in the singular metaphor of the wild verse he is singing, he imagines himself some love-stricken damsel whose object of affection is a sprucely-attired but ruthless arnaout or Albanian soldier. And the meaning of the song is after all nonsense, for she implores this ruthless deceiver not to strike her with his wooden slipper, whilst she loudly acknowledges, and that with not very becoming oaths, that none but the soldier is the object of her choice; and so she finally adjures him to come to her by all means "by night or by day, at the present, for the future, and always."

As is usual in these common-place love ditties, the

Arabs are not over particular as to what doggrel rhyme they use, nor are they at all scrupulous as to the sense or romance of the terms they apply, so long as they rhyme and make something like verse. As, for instance, in the present song, it is hard to say why a forlorn maiden should associate a wooden slipper with a sprucely-attired arnaout, who either has no shoes at all to his feet, or if he can afford such a luxury, invariably sports red leather slippers or boots. The same subterfuge for verse is prevalent amongst the Turks; as, for instance, in the case of another song with which our music-stricken Hammood indulges us, and which commences

Aman di wa, ya di wanà,
Doldor benà, bir finjanà.

Here the poet, who commenced with the usual flow of inspiration from the muses by beseeching his lady-love to fill him a goblet (or more properly speaking, a *finjan*) of something good to drink, being at a loss for a word to rhyme with *finjanà*, and with supreme contempt for sense and grammar, makes the second stanza conclude with *batinjanà*, signifying a vegetable only eatable when cooked.

Now had this unromantic bard even alluded to cucumbers, though still persisting in an outrage against romance, we and all persons who have long resided in the East could have readily comprehended the connecting link; for all Orientals, when indulging in a

finjan of raki, more especially the Turks, invariably eat raw cucumbers as a modifier to ardent spirits.

But to return to ourselves, it is with difficulty that we can persuade this inveterate songster that so peculiar is the organisation of European tympanums, however delightful to native-born Syrians the music may appear, to ourselves it is perfect martyrdom. Rather disheartened at such a rebuff, yet too jovial and good-natured to resent it by any appearance of sulkiness, the renowned Hammood, for renowned we discover him to be, launches forth suddenly and unexpectedly into very good English nursery rhyme, and sings us in tune, words correct, but pronunciation rather droll, the well-known song,

"Where are you going to, my pretty maid," etc.

With hearty good-will we join in the chorus, and perhaps for the first time, through many years, the echoes of the Lebanon wake up to our old English ditty.

Thus pleasantly and merrily we jog along, heedless of time and space, till by and by an abrupt turning brings us in sight of the factory. Only then we remember that two hours have elapsed since we first encountered our guide, and during this interval we have placed not less than five miles between ourselves and the home of our Druse friend: these reflections incline us without loss of time to turn our horses'

heads and go back as we came; but before such a resolution could be put into execution, the hospitable proprietor of the factory has espied us, and as the advent of two Europeans and acquaintances is a rare occurrence and a perfect windfall in these secluded parts, emissaries are immediately despatched from the factory to invite us to alight, with strict orders in case of our refusal, to seize upon the horses' bridles, and drag us there *nolens volens*. We have no alternative, so, proceeding to the factory door, we alight and are ushered in; in two minutes afterwards our hands are seized in the cordial grasp of welcome, and the hospitable Highlander, who leads a recluse's life in the pursuit of his avocation, overwhelms us with courtesy and kindness.

Whilst we are reposing and refreshing ourselves, the inmates of the factory are deep in the perusal of letters and papers brought up by the messenger who has so faithfully and agreeably acted the part of guide to ourselves. None but those who have experienced it can appreciate the extreme pleasure enjoyed by those who, from force of circumstances, or from choice, are exiles from home and friends, when occasions present themselves of communicating, though it be only through the medium of a letter or newspaper, with lands and people separated from them by many a mile of fathomless ocean.

Here, in the utter seclusion of the mountains, where men live only for living's sake, or to reap a competency

that may prove a sufficient harvest against the autumn of life,—business, and business exclusively, may be said to occupy the energies of body and mind; and these find ample occupation during the eight or ten hours devoted each week-day to such pursuit; but if there is anything that hangs heavily upon hand, it is the hours between sunset and bed-time.

No European, however willing to accede in all other points to the manners and customs and habits of the people he is constrained to dwell among, can accustom himself to the early-to-bed usages of these people. He cannot, in common with the Druse and the Maronite, go to bed with the first shades of nightfall and rise again with the lark; his education has taught him to require some mental recreation, and the only time he has to indulge in this is when the stern duty of the day is over, and his thoughts may relax from the perpetual strain put upon them.

Then it is that books and pamphlets and newspapers are an invaluable resource: the greatest bookworm in the world never derived more intrinsic worth and amusement from the perusal of printed information than does the European recluse in the East. To him even the advertisement sheet of the *Times* is a fountain head, an endless stream for the imagination to swim upon; the names of streets, the multifarious wants of the hundred advertisers, the lost or stolen, the cautions or beseechings, the "should this meet the eye of,"—in short, from the word "Supplement" down to the

printer's name in the last corner, is the skeleton of a theme which the active imagination of the long-absent Briton works up rapidly and ingeniously into a splendid essay, with connecting links that no one else would ever think or dream of.

The incidents of long-past years, the later occurrences of life in London, the gap since the last cab drove him to the railway station, and the last train deposited him near Southampton docks, and an indistinct glimmering of hope penetrating through the hazy uncertainty of futurity into time yet unborn, when, if life be spared and all go well, he hopes once again to hear the echo of his own footsteps rattling over the pavement of well-known streets;—all these strung together constitute a long and happy theme of quiet contemplation, till growing drowsy over the subject, the paper drops from his hands, the recluse starts up and awakes, and the stern reality of his present position is glaring upon him from all sides, painted upon the paperless walls of the room he then sits in upon Lebanon.

If such be the results from the perusal of a mere supplement, it may readily be conceived how the mind feasts upon letters teeming with affection, and full of incident only amusing or entertaining to those for whose private perusal they are intended.

In the present instance, we take good care not to interrupt by word or gesture the quiet but intense pleasure of those who are now perusing letters from their distant homes; but they, on their side, too

courteous by far to neglect their guests, simply skim over the contents so as to satisfy themselves that all goes right, and then these letters are re-folded and left for more leisurely perusal in the quiet seclusion of their own rooms. Not so, however, the newspapers,—bundle upon bundle of which are tumbled out of the messenger's sack, opened and glanced over with exclamations of surprise or delight, as some incident or picture rivets for a moment the attention of the inspector.

Here we have the *Times* newspaper, with the latest intelligence from the seat of war; which, strange as it may appear, taking the relative positions of the countries into consideration, is really news for the mountains. Casting his eye upon such another paragraph as that which details the recent narrow escape of the czar from being captured, the proprietor, in the height of his loyalty and delight, takes off his hat and flings it in the air, shouting out the while the intelligence of this fact to his friend and clerk, who is only half a yard distant from where he stands, occupied at the moment in poring over the pages of the *Illustrated News*. The amiable wife of our host takes exclusive possession of the *Ladies' Newspaper*, whilst the loving partner of the clerk is extolling to the skies a beautiful engraving of the Crystal Palace at Sydenham.

Amongst the mass of papers that strew the table we recognise many old faces. The *Economist*, the *Examiner*, and last, though by no means least, that

incomparable fellow, *Punch;* but this is kept as a *bonne bouche* for the evening, when all the other papers have been glanced over and thrown aside for future perusal; then lights are introduced, and our host, seating himself at the head of the table, unfolds the pages of wit. The first illustration is something connected with the war; the figures are irresistibly droll and ludicrous, and the costumes so complete that even the old servant, who has not much notion of drawings in general, recognises a Turk as figuring in the tableaux, and immediately exclaims, *Walla haida il Sultan*, "truly that is the padishah," for in his estimation none but crowned heads or potentates could lay claim to the distinguished honour of being represented in an English journal.

It is too late, even had we the desire, to take a stroll over the factory itself, but with the assistance of a *fannal*, we just peep into the reeling-room, and examine the magazines where the cocoons and the silk are stored, before returning to our Druse's house. The machinery is very complete, and all of the best European manufacture; perhaps, the last thing in the world that one might expect to meet in these desolate and solitary regions would be what we here find,—the most complete, and the latest contrivances of art and science.

Our host tells us that when the machinery was first set up, he was permitted no peace of mind or quiet, from the fact of all the neighbouring villages pouring

in in shoals to witness the marvellous force and grandeur of steam, and the not less wonderful purposes which a simple stream of water could be brought to serve.

It was impossible, at first, to keep the people from touching or meddling with the machinery in full play. Nothing could persuade them of the immense power of the engine in full play; nor was it till they had ample demonstration of the fact, by beams of wood thrust into the revolving wheels being spun round as though they were feathers, that they could form some faint conception of the peril they incurred by meddling with them.

Our host was willing and glad that the uneducated people of these parts should have ocular proof of the vastly superior talents of Europeans in general; he, therefore, endeavoured to explain item by item of the ponderous machinery, but finding that their curiosity seemed never to be gratified, the engineer was compelled to resort to an artifice, which so terrified the visitors that they fled in the utmost dismay, never venturing within the precincts of the reeling-room except when well assured that no business was going on.

What had alarmed them so much was, the engineer putting on high pressure to the steam in the boiler, which communicated by pipes to all parts of the reeling-room; through these mediums he introduced a vast quantity of steam into the room, so that in a few seconds everything was concealed and enveloped

by the most impenetrable mist; at the same time, the alarmed visitors, who were expecting an explosion, and thought that something had gone wrong in the works, were still more terrified and dismayed by the roaring of the steam as it was let off through the safety-valve of the boiler; so that scrambling to the doorways, as best they could, they scampered away towards home, and never stopped to look back until they considered themselves beyond the reach of harm.

The benefit both in time and quality resulting from the introduction of these factories into the mountains has been very great. By the assistance of one tourbin, or water-wheel, from forty to two hundred reels are set in motion, revolving at greater or less rapidity according to the option of the engineer; and the machinery is so constructed that any single reeler who breaks the thread of the cocoon he is reeling, is instantly enabled to arrest the progress of his reel whilst all the others continue in motion, by setting his foot upon a pedal. At the same time the great facilities afforded to the reeler from the well-measured velocity of the wheel, the ready and continual supply of water heated to a proper temperature, the abundance of cocoons within his reach, and the rarity of any stoppage in the process of reeling, all these contribute in enabling the same boy or man who by the ordinary Syrian process of reeling could hardly produce twenty drachms of silk a-day, to reel off a *rotolo* or more.

Meanwhile in every other respect a large saving is effected. Not only is the quality produced of more equal threads, finer, and more glossy, but the cocoon is reeled off to the very last atom of silk within the husk, so that, in reality, there is not lost one particle that is valuable; besides this, at the season of the silk recolt, that is when the cocoons are freshly formed, the advantages derivable by using European machinery are great, and productive of immense profit. Before the cocoon is stifled it has been calculated to produce ten times as much silk, and of a brighter and finer quality than when it has been subjected to that process; but as the cocoons cannot be kept more than ten days, or a fortnight at the most, on account of the moth perforating after that time and ruining their value, it stands to reason that the peasants who were restricted to their ordinary slow process of reeling could never hope to reel off more than two or three *rotolos* from unstifled cocoons.

The consequence was an immense loss in the profits yielded by their gardens; it was, therefore, an admirable and profitable chance for the peasant when Europeans established factories on the mountains, and offered to take their whole supply of cocoons off their hands without putting them to the risk and trouble of reeling, at the same time that they received a greater valuation than they could ever hope to get for their silk.

Meanwhile the factories, during the height of the

season, kept their two hundred reels perpetually at work, so that before it was absolutely necessary to subject the cocoons to the smothering process, they had reeled off thousands of *rotolos* of fresh ones, gaining an immense average per cent. upon the process.

Our host employs, besides his European assistant, an English engineer, and three or four native overseers, who are adepts in the art of reeling, and who superintend the others at work, besides assisting in airing, weighing, and packing the silk. Night and day, day and night, around this solitary abode of industry is heard the perpetual roar and foaming of cataracts of water as the stream rushes down an artificial precipice made for the tourbin, and thence, passing through the building and out into the open air, it gushes over another point, and so disappears in the hazy distance.

With the exception of the utter seclusion, their being out of the way of the world and the world's news, the inmates of the factory have nothing to complain of in the way of comfort and enjoyment. Their own gardens afford healthy recreation, and supply all their wants in vegetables, fruits, and flowers; their poultry yard is extensive and well stocked; the scenery around them is magnificent; their walks and rides are boundless, and always full of novelty and wild picturesque beauty; whilst game in abundance gives ample occupation for their sporting propensities whenever the all-absorbing business of the factory may permit a day's or a week's respite from labour. Above

all, the climate is healthy, and the atmosphere pure and unclouded, so that saving only the want of society, or mental amusements, they can be said to lack nothing.

The papers that have arrived this evening will afford them occupation for a week to come; meanwhile some other adventures may drop in upon their solitude, and help to cast a cheerful beam upon their social inclinations. But for ourselves the term of our visit has expired—the pale moon peeping over Lebanon, warns us of this fact—so thanking our friends for the hospitality and information we had obtained, we scramble into our saddles again, and leaving our horses to their natural instinct to guide them home, leisurely we follow upon the tract of the night breeze as it sweeps by us on its rapid career towards the plains and the distant ocean.

CHAPTER XI.

A BRIDAL PROCESSION — ARRIVAL OF THE BRIDE — BRILLIANT CORTÉGE — JUVENILE FIANÇAILLES — DRUSE MORALITY — LOVE MATCHES — MARRIAGE CONTRACT — THE BRIDEGROOM — THE BRIDE—DISPLAY OF GRIEF—ILLUSTRATION OF PARABLES—PREPARATIONS FOR THE MARRIAGE—ARRIVAL OF THE CAVALCADE.

> We haste—the chosen and the lovely bringing;
> Love still goes with her from her place of birth!
> Deep, silent joy, within her soul is springing,
> Though in her glance the light no more is mirth.
>
> MRS. HEMANS.

THUS might sing the noisy and clamorous crew who burst upon our solitude and startle our horses beyond measure, as with torches and noisy drum, with hootings and exclamations, and firing of musketry and pistols, they bear away, not to unwilling captivity, the newly-made bride of some happy Druse who is impatiently awaiting her arrival at K'farchima, the same village that we are returning to; we say, thus might they sing, only unfortunately for themselves, no Arabian poet has translated the verses of Mrs. Hemans into their vernacular, and this being the

case, they are compelled to content themselves with snatches of their own peculiar love ditties.

We rein in our horses so as to suffer the riotous crew to pass, and as they throng by, lighted by the glaring flame of numerous torches, they present a most picturesque appearance. The vanguard of the procession consists of two young men, dressed in a bran new suit of clothes with many bright colours about them, who lead the way, leaping and dancing and shouting as they go along, and firing off their old fowling pieces as quickly as they can re-load them. These are particular friends and companions of the bridegroom, and they are presumed to be in as complete a state of felicity as the bridegroom himself.

Next to these comes the band, consisting of a couple of native drums and as many primitive pipes, which emit a most discordant clamour, and play over the same bars of music full a hundred times in as many minutes. The drummers, however, belabour their instruments most unmercifully, effectually drowning several of the squeeling notes of the other musicians; behind these, and to support their energy, runs an old fellow with a bottle and a glass, from which he liberally supplies them ever and anon; then by twos or threes come from twenty to forty "*shebbabeen*," young lads belonging to the village of the bridegroom, all of whom have long since sung themselves into a state of helpless hoarseness, but they still persist in their unromantic hootings, each by turn singing a line of

some favourite love song, the chorus of which is taken up by all present, whilst the greater mass of the people keep time to the tune by perpetually clapping their hands.

After these, approach some elders of the village, more sedate and grave in their deportment, but startling one incessantly by firing off pistols and fire-arms in all directions and in all attitudes, so that it is a perfect marvel that some in their haste do not forget their ramrods and shoot each other or the musicians. Immediately following these sages comes a stately charger richly caparisoned, led by two men with torch lights in their hands, and surrounded by a number of men and women on foot; seated on top of this charger is something wrapped up in a loose large white sheet, whose ends trail down to the ground and whose folds conceal from vulgar gaze the beautiful bride, who is supposed to be elegantly attired and decked with jewellery and flowers, but who might be represented by a doll, or a monkey, or anything else, for all we can swear to the contrary. The only person who would have proof of the identity of the bride with this bundle of white cloth, is the expectant bride-groom himself.

After the bride has passed, come three or four more nondescripts mounted on horses and mules of less pre-tensions, and these carry before them on their saddles large bundles supposed to contain the wardrobe and jewellery of the bride, and which they would fain

make us believe to consist of valuables to a fabulous amount, but the real cost of which might without any great difficulty be estimated, and found not to exceed some three pounds sterling. After these bearers of the bride's wardrobe come a number of stragglers, principally old women, from all the surrounding villages, whose withered old faces would be very becoming to the usual veil carried by women, but who eschew this disdainfully.

In passing us these old hags give us a cheer after their own fashion, and this they accomplish by passing their forefinger very rapidly over their under lips, screeching in the meanwhile vehemently through their closed teeth; the sound produced is not at all unlike the gabbling of a dozen turkey cocks, and the pride and boast of these old creatures is to keep up their cry the longest.

A good deal of dust is all that remains of the brilliant cortége on the mountain road; so spurring on our horses again we follow closely on their track, determined if possible to add to the happiness of the bridegroom by honoring him with our society for the remainder of the evening. As there will be nothing novel in the spectacle until we come within hearing of the bridegroom's house, we call a straggler to our assistance and ask him to give us all the information he is possessed of respecting any peculiarities which constitute the ceremonial of a Druse marriage, or what precedes or takes place subsequent to the wedding.

He tells us that the Druses, unlike the Turks, content themselves with one wife, and that they usually marry soon after arriving at manhood, choosing also a bride who has but just entered womanhood. Some instances occur, however, of parties being betrothed by their parents whilst yet in perfect infancy, and then if both parties survive until they are grown up they are immediately married. No tie can be more binding or sacred with the Druse than the promise of marriage. In the long intercourse which sometimes ensues before the children have grown up and the promise can be accomplished, many incidents occur which amongst other people and countries would be all-sufficient to render null and void these juvenile fiançailles.

But among the Druses this is never the case; the fathers and boys and girls, instigated either by friendship or by a wish mutually to strengthen and enrichen their families, and with that peculiar clanship which in some instances renders them so similar to the ancient Highlanders, make these betrothals with the certainty that, come what may, if the life of the parties betrothed only be spared, they will assuredly be eventually united. And so sacred does a young Druse consider the duty of obedience to his parent's wishes, that though that parent may have been long dead and buried by the time he arrives at manhood, or though in the intercourse of childhood he may have taken a dislike to the future partner destined to share his joys and sorrows; though he may fancy many of his neighbours' daughters, more

beautiful, more comely, and better adapted to link with his fate, yet he will in no wise deviate from the promise made during his infancy. And more than this, being compelled by the force of honest morality to cast his lot with one whom he would never have chosen had the choice been left to himself, he is above resenting his mishap upon the head of the innocent and harmless cause of his dislike; but on the contrary, will sink all thoughts connected with other happiness on the day of his marriage, and at once concentrate his affection and esteem upon her whom the fates have allotted him as wife and friend.

It sometimes happens that even greater obstacles than those above recounted are thrown in the way of young people thus affianced in their childhood. Fortune may have dealt hardly with one or both of their families. poverty and destitution may be staring them in the face; yet though tempting offers may be thrown in the way of the friends on either side, though all the parties who were witnesses to the promise given at betrothal may have been swept from the earth, still the girl and the boy, and their neighbours around them, have been taught to consider each as destined for the other; and though the time and their union may be necessarily delayed, till by labour or the assistance of friends they can accumulate that pittance indispensable for the ceremonials attendant upon an Eastern wedding, they ultimately accomplish their end; and very rarely indeed can it be said of a Druse and

his wife that they disagree and are unhappy, as is unfortunately too frequently the case with man and wife in more civilised and more enlightened lands.

But leaving these exceptional cases aside we return to the usual routine of Druse love matches and marriages. The greater mass of people leave their boys and girls to grow up unshackled by any promises or vows until they reach the age of maturity.

Meanwhile the boys and girls have played together without any restraint upon their actions or thoughts, and it usually happens before they arrive at that age when stern necessity requires that they should no longer freely communicate and converse with each other, young men and maidens have long since secretly formed their respective likes and dislikes; and when the subject of marriage is brought upon the tapis, the young man, whom it most concerns, generally throws out a hint to his parents which leads them with least trouble where to seek for a bride for their son.

Of course there are some instances, for even amongst the Druses the course of true love never did run smoothly, in which the girl has been already bespoken, and the fond youth is destined to disappointment; but when this is the case, then the matter is handed over entirely to the mother, the party most concerned only premising, as a *sine quâ non*, that the girl, whoever she be, must be young and beautiful.

When these preliminaries have been arranged, then three days before the time fixed for the celebration of

the wedding, the young man assembles together all the youths of the village, and picking out of these the finest and handsomest looking men, makes them arm themselves *cap à pied*, and himself a perfect armory of warlike weapons heading them, he proceeds in regular procession to the house of the father of his future bride, who, on his side, having duly received intimation of the fact, arms himself and his household also, and stands at the threshold of the door to receive him, demanding in words similar to Scott's celebrated song,—

> "O come ye in peace here, or come ye in war,
> Or to dance at our bridal, young Lord Lochinvar?"

Here in the presence of the assembled villagers, and after loud discussion, the final articles of the marriage contract are settled and agreed to; the bride's father, who possesses some portion of that love of gain so inherent amongst Eastern nations, usually adds a few piastres, or a sheep or two, to what was originally contemplated as the valuation of the bride.

But the young man, who is impatient to gain the final consent, and who moreover remembers that "*nunkey pays for me*," that his father will bear the cost of expenses, usually agrees to the compact; it is then agreed as a secondary matter of consideration, what dowry is to be settled by the young man upon the bride herself; but this is merely a fictitious arrangement, for such a thing as pin money is unknown amongst Druse married ladies.

This point adjusted, the young man solemnly declares and promises to the family to protect and love his future wife; then the betrothed girl veiled over from head to foot, and accompanied by her nearest female relatives, is brought to the door, and her lover asks her, in a distinct voice, that all-important question which settles the destinies of so many poor mortals on earth. As a matter of course the girl replies in the affirmative, but at the same time she presents him, in token of her future obedience, with a dagger carefully sewn up in a woollen scarf of her own manufacture, and which she has many days, nay years previously, knitted inch by inch, as she pictured up in her childish imagination the realization of this happy hour, when the bold lover should come to ask her for this token. It is to be hoped that the husband may never have occasion to unrip the threads which conceal this sharp-edged tool from sight, for among the Druses it is supposed that he will only resort to it in order to protect his wife from some murderous assault, or to satiate the hateful passion of jealousy.

This much having been accomplished, the father invites the future bridegroom, and all his friends, to enter into his house and pass the remainder of the day in joyful celebration of the happy event. But the Druses, like other natives of Syria, have no notions of anything proving amusing or exhilarating unless there be a good deal of noise upon the subject; accordingly a drum is borrowed from one of the neighbours, and the

young men, seating themselves in a circle, and being supplied with pipes and coffee *ad libitum*, commence the proceedings of the day by a boisterous outburst of mirth and revelry; most of them sing, others dance, whilst the drum is being incessantly tatooed as it goes round, changed from hand to hand. Now and then, when a lull occurs, some of them load their guns and waste a good deal of powder in noise; others, who are good horsemen, amuse themselves and terrify the old people of the village, by tearing up and down at the utmost speed their horses can attain, interchanging showers of wooden lances, or suddenly throwing their horses upon their haunches whilst suddenly galloping along at full speed.

Meanwhile the bride, who disappeared immediately after her public interview with her future husband, has been taken away by her female relatives to the nearest bath, and there in company with them, and as many other women as can well obtain admittance, they pass the remainder of the day in the fish-like amusement of splashing each other with water, undergoing the whole process of purification, and filling up idle moments by the most dismal and lamentable howlings—a source of unspeakable gratification to all the old women of the village, who, like kindred evil spirits, take up the howl and echo it from house to house.

There is nothing in this world that affords an old Arab woman more intense relish than the opportunities which now and then present themselves for indulging

in lamentations. They have always a ready howl wherewith to display their sympathy; and in the houses of the sick or dying, in the abodes where calamity has entered, when some one is going upon a long journey, or when, as upon the present occasion, a young girl is about to quit for good and all the paternal roof, though, perhaps, she may be going to live only next door: in short, upon all occasions, where a proper display of regret or grief is deemed indispensable, these old women congregate, and give lusty aid to the melancholy scene. There is no occasion here to send for hired mourners; indeed, so great is their partiality to wailing and lamentation, that they would eagerly pay a premium to enjoy the privilege of a howl. The ceremonies above recorded are repeated on two successive days, except that the bride does not again make herself visible to her future lord.

At last the auspicious morning for the celebration of the marriage arrives; stout preparations are early on foot at the house of the bridegroom; women are busy washing up and scrubbing the floor, and arranging mats, cushions, etc., against the reception of the expected guests, and these guests are supposed to consist of all and every one who like to present themselves to partake of the hospitality or join in the revelry, it being always understood that these people do make their appearance in their best holiday attire; and this seems to have been a custom prevalent ever since the days of our Saviour, all over the Holy Land and Syria. As

in the parable, the guest who presented himself at the wedding feast without a wedding garment, was instantly cast out and expelled, so at the present day it would be looked upon and resented as an insult if any labourer made his appearance without donning his best holiday attire.

Then, again, an apt illustration of another parable; it is still the duty of the lord of the feast to assign to those who honour him with their presence, a position in his house, or a seat on his divan, according to their respective claims to consideration. Thus in the outer courts are invariably to be encountered the poorer classes of inhabitants, all served with equal liberality and profusion, but none permitted to enter into the precincts of the house itself, except it be on servile errands; while in the interior, those admissible to distinction are ranged with particular care and precision along the room, the most honourable guests being seated at the top and near the master of the house himself, and those of least pretension nearest to the door of entry.

Large cauldrons, destined to boil sacks full of *burghol* and rice into *pilaufs*, are set upon a dozen fires, and allowed to heat against the hour of need. Pyramids of cheese and fruits, labyrinths of vegetables, oceans of sour milk, whole detachments of slaughtered poultry, and one or two truculent old sheep, fattened, slaughtered, and ready-skinned for the occasion, are all to be met with, jumbled up in confusion, in the small room allotted to culinary purposes. Stuffing, roast-

ing, and stewing, will keep the women's hands full of work till close upon dinner time ; but in addition to all this, there is a vast quantity of sweetmeats to be prepared, coffee to be ground, tobacco to be cut, and tumbac to be washed and prepared, all ready against the frequent calls that will be made for them when the guests have assembled; so that nobody in the house, perhaps the bridegroom only excepted, can be said to enjoy a sinecure office that day; and the children and the cats will be guilty of more pilfering, and subjected to more castigations, than has ever been heard of in that house since the memorable occasion of feasting and rejoicing which was held here, when all the neighbours came to congratulate the father upon the birth of that son who is now about to become a married man himself.

All the available pipes and narghilès that can be mustered in the village, have been borrowed for this evening's entertainment; so that our friend Abou Shein, who was compelled to lend his only pipe, has been suffering a martyrdom since we parted with him at mid-day for the want of his usual solace. The pots are bubbling and smoking away fiercely in the kitchen ; the whole roasted sheep scientifically stuffed with ever so many pounds of rice, well seasoned with divers ingredients, scents the whole atmosphere round and makes the old man, the bridegroom's father, wish it was time to dish up : finally, the twenty cooks in the kitchen pass the word that everything has been cooked and is ready.

Just at that moment, though we are wholly unconscious of the fact, the noise of our cavalcade reaches the expectant ears of the inmates of the bridegroom's house ; immediately a faint outcry and the sound of distant fire arms is wafted over the night air. They have espied our approach and now they come rushing out, a multitude with torches and acclamations, and frequent *feu de joie* to welcome the bride to her future home. Nearer and louder the noises swell upon the air, the dancers of our party fling themselves about in the wildest and most grotesque attitudes, and the gabbling of our old women surpasses a legion of turkeys. Like two mighty torrents let loose from their embankments, the advancing parties surge and roll on mightily with increasing strife and outcry, till finally the two crowds merge into one vast multitude, and the shouting and the revelry are deafening beyond description.

At this point, having arrived at the outskirts of the village, we turn our horses' heads, and leaving the noisy procession arrive at the house of our Druse host ; but there is no sleep or slumber for our eyelids to-night. Abou Shein has been waiting impatiently with urgent invitations from the bridegroom and his father, so we have barely dismounted from our jaded animals before we are ushered into the house, where mirth and festivity are the order of the night.

CHAPTER XII.

FESTAL SCENE — A DRUSE ORATOR AND POET — CHORUS OF ARAB WOMEN — IMPROVISATION — COMPLIMENTARY ADDRESS — DRUSE AMBITION — THE DINNER — ARABIAN DANCE — THE BRIDE — THE BRIDAL CHAMBER — CONCLUSION OF THE WEDDING FESTIVITIES — SUPERSTITION.

Les yeux baissés, elle marche couverte d'un voile; sa contenance est digne et modeste.

La Jerusalem Délivrée.
(*Traduction d'Auguste Desplaces.*)

An excessive lurid glare rises from a hundred torch-lights, shining palpably against the darkness of night; this is where the wedding guests are assembled. As we enter upon the scene of conviviality, a most enlivening spectacle presents itself. Huge pitch torches, fixed into iron stands, which are stuck in the ground, serve to illuminate almost the whole village, and the multitude which conducted the bride to the threshold of her future home, having handed her over to careful old duennas, have scattered themselves over the building and in the courtyard,

and taken up the positions allotted to their respective ranks. All these are squatted upon the ground, occupied in a busy hum of conversation. As we enter, preceded by our host, they immediately rise to their feet as a mark of respect to European guests; and the bridegroom and his father come out to meet us, and conduct us to the chief seat of honour, at the upper end of the principal room, where we repose upon a divan side by side with the lord of the feast.

We have scarcely seated ourselves and accepted the proferred narghilès, when we are saluted by a tremendous gabbling proceeding from all the assembled old women, who are standing outside the door. No sooner has this clamour subsided for a while, than a young Druse, who is looked upon as the orator and poet of the village, and who is possessed of handsome features and a commanding figure, steps out into the centre of the hall and commences a laudatory address, full of the flowers of rhetoric, and intended as a high compliment to ourselves, the bridegroom, and the master of the house. He speaks in a clear, distinct, and musical voice; but the intonations are those usually adopted by all Orientals in reading or reciting poetry, and his speech on the present occasion is extempore blank verse. As he reaches the end of each line he lays peculiarly strong emphasis upon the last word, and at the completion of each stanza of about twelve lines or so, he pauses for breath and encouragement, when the old women, who are watchful for the

opportunity of edging in their singular howls, seize upon the advantage afforded them, and make the house ring again with their chorus.

We have before remarked that the noise they make is singularly illustrative of a parcel of enraged turkey cocks. On the present occasion it is more so than ever; for as those noisy creatures, bursting with indignation and red with fierce wrath, will silently await the conclusion of a donkey's braying, or any other noise that excites their ire, and then simultaneously burst into a gabbling chorus, so on the present occasion these crones stand on thorns of impatience longing for the orator to pause in his improvisation, so as to give vent to their pent-up exclamations.

To those who are unacquainted with the Arab language, the whole scene would represent a most ludicrous spectacle, and all the eloquence of the poet subside into the nature of an unintelligible comic song; but to us who are familiar with their vernacular, there is something exceedingly romantic and beautiful in the custom. Both the theme and the language are well sustained and eloquent, and there is only wanting the harp of Erin to remind us of those bygone days when the bards of old celebrated the achievements and prowess of the sons of chivalry, in beautiful verse and heart-stirring music.

As it is more than probable that many of the readers of this book may never have had a sample of the speeches usually delivered on these occasions, we

insert such portions as may give a general idea of the style generally practised.

Good men are like the dew that falls in the hottest month of summer,
Wherever it settles upon the earth there grass and flowers spring up;
And like a desolation, a dreary waste, are the poor who have
nowhere to rest themselves or lay their heads.
Still the same dew falls equally and alike upon all!
But the good man's heart is as a fertile soil,
Where the least rain drop brings forth vegetation;
Whilst others, whose hearts are neither good nor bad,
Sip the like moisture. But the barren soil refuses to yield its fruit.
And the wicked and bad are as a desert sand,
There the rain falls but never penetrates at all;
The scorching sun of evil deeds burns up the moistness,
And no seeds germinate, but all die and wither,
And become alike a sterile, terrible wilderness.

Here follows a chorus of the old ladies.

And where the first blade of generous grass flourishes,
The same comes to perfection and yields its own seed;
So with flowers, reproductive of their own sort,
They, too, in course of growth, spread and increase.
Thus the deeds of good men augment themselves,
And one good action gives birth to many more,
Till fame and honour watch the fertile spot,
Where grass first sprung,
And happiness there takes up his abode.
Meanwhile, the barren soil, where thorns and briers grow,
Chokes up its own productions, or withering fast,
Sinks into the similitude of the wilderness itself.
And that terrible wilderness, hovered over
By heat, famine, pestilence, misery, and sin,
Becomes a scourge upon the universe,
A beacon for all nature's children to avoid.

The old women gabble more violently than ever.

Bad men, like bad soils, are destructive
Not only to themselves, but to all who come

Within the baneful influence of their evil jurisdiction;
But good men, like fertile mountain-tops,
Are a beacon set up in the universe
To warn all stragglers from the evil path,
And guide them where to go.
Their mornings are as the drooping vine,
Clustering richly with dew-bespangled grapes;
Their noon-tide is as the summer sun shining pleasantly
Upon the banks of some shaded purling stream;
Their night is as the disappearance of a brilliant meteor
From the sky. And all men cry,
Whither is he gone!

Chorus of crones.

Thus as the birds and butterflies hover round
The shadiest groves, where flowers in wild profusion grow,
And balanced on the leafy boughs, sing forth their joy,
Or sip the nectar from the opening rose;
So men of understanding like to flock around
The abode of wisdom, where the wise and great,
Shining in intellect, teach them wisdom's path;
Or string their hearts to mirth and song,
By shedding hospitality abroad.
And when themselves, the focus of some happy theme,
Mirth flashes from their gladsome eyes,
Then those who oft have tasted pleasure at their home,
Join heart and soul in harmless revelry.

Chorus.

But when the benefactor of a village feast is Wisdom's son,
When all around the genial influence has been felt,
Of his kind deeds and actions, which like soothing oil
Has poured frequent balm into aching heart or limb;
When he proclaims the feast to celebrate a joyful rite,
Then speedy flock the multitudes around.
In looks, in gestures, or in words, each brings a mite,
An offering for the peace and happiness of that man's home.
The song, the laugh, the noisesome revelry, and dance,
All these are tokens of their heartfelt joy;
And join heart and hand with me to sing,
Peace, happiness, and wealth without alloy.

Here ensue an enthusiastic gabbling and clapping of hands, in which all present strive to outrival each other, and which lasts for several minutes ; meanwhile the old man, who is in the seventh heaven of his glory, stands up and bows gracefully with both hands folded over his breast, as he acknowledges the compliment paid him. Order is once more restored, the music tunes up in the corner, and our orator throws himself into an attitude and sings the remainder of his complimentary address to a really sentimental and pretty flow of verse, which, however, gains amazingly by being retailed without the music, or the squeeling accompaniment of the musicians.

An old man planted two vine slips
Close by his garden wall,
They were healthy and young from a vigorous stem,
And took root in a pleasant soil.
So when winter had passed, and spring time came,
The old man sat and watched,
As in the congenial heat they grew,
And spread out their branches apart.

Chorus.

So the lord of the feast has this day brought,
And planted within his home,
Two brave young hearts as man and wife,
To flourish and grow together.
And it's oh! may the sun of prosperity shine,
And virtue crown their paths;
And like the two slips of the old man's vine,
May they take deep root in hope of joy,
And grow into stately plants.

And when summer was come, the hotter sun
Made the leaves on the branches sprout,

And these grew longer and longer each day,
Twining each other about.
And the old man's eyes were gladdened with joy
As the buds of the blossom burst forth,
For he knew full well that a harvest was nigh
And that grapes would be soon brought forth.

Chorus.

So the lord of the house has this day brought,
And planted within his home,
Two brave young hearts as man and wife,
To flourish and grow together.
And it's Oh! in the sunshine of bliss and love,
May affection and fondness sprout,
Till the heart of each other is wound about
With the strongest links of esteem,
And with joy the old man's eyes gleam bright!

In this style, with a great deal more which would not interest the reader, (whose pardon we crave for so lengthy an imitation of the recitation and song of our Arabic bard,) the song continues through several couplets more, the whole winding up with a whirlwind of applause when the poet prophesies that the marriage will be productive of every blessing, and that as for arrows in the shape of children it will require a stupendous quiver to hold them all. This is the acmé of Druse ambition; they do not care how much they may have to tussel and combat with the difficulties entailed by poverty, so long as they have plenty of sons and daughters.

Our songster and poet, who is pretty well exhausted by his efforts, slinks away to that corner occupied by his friends, the musicians, who look upon him in the light of a prodigy of nature; and there seated, he is

supplied with refreshments, whilst the friends of the family and some of the more familiar guests occupy themselves in making arrangements for the supper being served. Tables are ranged all round the room similar to those used by our Druse friend, Abou Shein, and to each table is allotted from five to six guests; when the supper is served all fall to simultaneously. As to the poorer classes, who are sitting outside in the yard, they are compelled to do without tables; this, however, does not take away from their appetites, or from the excellence and quantity of the food set before them.

Like all Oriental dinners everybody thinks of eating and nobody of talking, so that the business of that meal is speedily despatched, and the tables and fragments are cleared away. Then a friend of the bridegroom, who is acting as bridesman, comes round and sprinkles us all freely with rose water and orange flower water; the floor is swept up, smoking materials introduced, coffee sipped, and then the entertainments of the evening are resumed. There is no end to the uncouth music and songs, nor any limit put to the freedom with which jokes are detailed; and loud bursts of laughter and acclamations hail any successful jest. Our friend, Abou Shein, who is held in great estimation this night from the fact of our being his guests and of his having introduced us here, is called upon by the lord of the feast to stand forth and give us a specimen of the usual Arabian dance. Ready to the call he jumps

into the centre of the room, and divesting his head of the long narrow handkerchief wound round his tarboosh, he uses this as a scarf, and throwing himself into a graceful attitude, calls loudly for the music to strike up. Slowly he shuffles along, keeping admirable time to the notes of the music; but as this gradually verges into a quick tune, so he throws greater activity into all his limbs till, finally, every energy seems bursting through his sinewy and naked calves as he goes through the regular steps of the *raks*, twisting about and writhing like a serpent that has got its tail entangled in some crevice of a rock. Amazing indeed seems to be the pliability of every joint in his body; he dances until his legs and the musician's arms are ready to drop off with fatigue, till suddenly he subsides into a stooping posture, and making a low salaam retreats walking backwards to the seat he occupied; then the music ceases and the musicians shout lustily for refreshments.

So passes the evening, with alternate dances and songs, but it is not only within doors that these amusements have been a-foot; the humbler classes occupying the yard have not been one whit behind in their vocal performances, or the agility they have displayed in the dance. Possessed of a veritable drum of their own, with several accomplished peasant songsters, they may be said to have outrivalled the display within; besides which, moreover, they have had several athletic games, and the young men have made a show of their

strength and nerve by engaging in wrestling matches to vanquish each other, in which they have put every nerve to the strain, not only from the impulse of wishing to overcome an adversary, but because all the damsels of the village have been looking on from house-tops and bye-ways, loudly applauding the victor whenever he threw his opponent.

Meanwhile it may be a matter of curiosity to know what has become of the bride in all this long interval since she first crossed the threshold of her future abode. She, poor soul, like a timid bird, carefully watched by the mother and other female relatives of the bridegroom, has been at once conducted to the nuptial chamber, which is situated on the opposite side of the yard, and there she has been sobbing out her heavy and weary hours of loneliness in vain and fruitless regrets for those happy years of childhood when, with unrestrained liberty, she was mistress of her actions and her time. Such at least is supposed to be the sad theme which occupies her reflections, though if the real truth were known, perhaps the only motive for the grief, (apart from a natural timidity in the presence of those dreadful old duennas who are hereafter to watch her path with the green eyes of jealousy,) is a sense that amongst her people it would be considered highly indecorous if she did not indulge in a proper amount of lamentation, sighs, and tears. And it is this motive that precludes her from enjoying the goodly supper set before her, which the other ladies

relish with undisguised appetites, but of which she only tastes a mouthful, and washes that mouthful down with her own copious tears.

About midnight, when, as if by instinctive influence, a temporary lull reigns over the scene of hilarity, a mysterious individual walks into the room where we are seated, and quietly sidling up to the bridegroom's father whispers something in his ears which is wholly unintelligible to ourselves. The stranger then withdraws, but he no sooner reaches the door than the old women set up a terrific gabbling, and simultaneously the bridegroom and all the guests, the father and one or two elders only excepted, stand up, and by mutual understanding the grand procession of the night is formed. Some old lady, who is carefully enveloped, and whose exact relationship we cannot discover, takes the bridegroom by the hand and leads him to the door and so across the yard to the threshold of the nuptial chamber. As he passes along he walks through a perfect wall on either side of human beings, clustered closely together, and each striving to follow nearest upon his heels so as to get a sight if possible of the bride; we being distinguished guests are placed immediately behind the bridegroom, so that when the door of the bridal apartment is opened we are permitted to stand upon its threshold whilst all the women pass into the bride's room.

The bride stands in the centre of the apartment completely covered over with a red veil bespangled

with small brass wire stars; she is supported on either side by two of the bridegroom's nearest relatives, and the bridegroom himself receives from the hand of his own mother the tantour which he is about to place upon the head of his bride, and which is tantamount to the ring used by Christians. He now advances close to his bride, and with his left hand removing the veil, almost simultaneously he uses his right hand to place the tantour upon her head.

There she stands revealed truly a charming young creature, with modest drooping eye-lashes and a brilliant tinge upon her cheek. Her face is really beautiful, her costume the most picturesque, we were going to say her *tout ensemble*—admirable; when a sudden rush of all the women from the bridal chamber, who are howling like frenzied maniacs, has forced us out in the yard again, and the door of the nuptial chamber is closed.

We get back as speedily as we can to our seat beside the bridegroom's father, for really the noise and the turmoil that surround us on all sides are appalling beyond description. All the women, old and young, pretty and ugly, rich and poor, are mingled together and gabbling away with all their might and main in the yard; all the young men are dancing with the wildest enthusiasm a species of cannibal war dance, flinging up their guns in the air, catching and firing them off as they fall, kicking up their heels in every direction, shooting, bellowing, screaming,—in short

going through every process which would entitle us to indict them for a nuisance or authorize any commission upon lunacy to declare the whole assemblage,—our respectable selves and a few of the elders only excepted —fit inmates for Bedlam.

In this manner do the Druses terminate their wedding festivities; not that they separate so soon as the bridegroom has disappeared from among them, but that there is no further novelty in the features of the entertainment for the evening, for the noise and the turmoil never have any intermission till daylight silences the riotous crew. The reason for all this is that the Druses have a superstition which leads them to suppose that Gins or evil spirits are usually more than ordinarily busy upon such-like occasions, and they believe that noise and wakefulness will frighten them away from interfering with the future happiness of the newly-wedded pair.

As we return home, weary with our day's excursion, Abou Shein tells us with a sigh that no such jollifications or precautions inaugurated his marriage. We ask our host whether from the want of them he has ever felt one whit the less contented with his lot; and when he replies in the negative we whisper into his ear a short but startling moral, and that is, that hollow and empty vessels emit most sound when struck, but yet are far more useful and valuable when full of wholesome pilauf, or perhaps what would suit him better still, full of silver piastres.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ANSYRIIS—DRUSE EMIGRATION—SPIRIT OF INDEPENDENCE—CRITICAL POSITION—A PRINCEDOM ON LEBANON—SACRED CITIES—SHEIN'S ACCOUNT OF A DRUSE INSURRECTION—SIGNAL OF ALARM—CONCLUSION OF SHEIN'S ACCOUNT.

"Ille etiam cæcos instare tumultus
Sæpe monet, fraudesque et operta tumescere bella."
VIRGIL.

THE morning after the wedding the sun has stolen a march upon us, before we can shake off the lethargy occasioned by last night's wakefulness. This, however, is not of much importance, as almost all the village is in the same predicament, and the inhabitants have given themselves a holiday to recruit their strength and recover their voices before returning to their every-day occupations. As for our hostess and her daughter, to such good purpose did they assist during the uproar of last night, that, saving a wheezing sound, they can barely articulate; Abou Shein, however, who returned home with us, is better off in this respect than most of his neighbours, and as he is at liberty to remain with us all day, we take advantage of this circumstance to gather from him such general information

as he is enabled to impart relative to the Druses inhabiting Mount Lebanon.

According to their own traditions, the Druses believe that their ancestors originally dwelt upon that range of mountains situated between Laodicea and the extensive plains of the Amuk, and which are now exclusively inhabited by fierce and little-known Ansyrii tribes.

In 1811, Topal Ali, a notorious ruffian, then governor of G'sr-il-Shü, a considerable district situated on the banks of the Orontes, and occupying a central position between Latakia and Aleppo, penetrated into the mountain recesses, with a most ferocious horde of vagabond cutthroats, and after committing the most atrocious cruelties, finally utterly expelled all the harmless Druse families then dwelling in those mountains. The Druses, in a measure, had restrained the foraging and thievish propensities of the Ansyriis; but now these parts were left wholly in possession of that bandit people who still infest them. The passes were rendered impenetrable to travellers or merchants, and remain, even at the present day, the terror of many of the towns and villages in the surrounding plains, where these lawless tribes make frequent descents, and carry off the richest booty.

Upwards of fifteen hundred Druse families, the survivors of those who had been ruthlessly massacred, are said upon this occasion to have fled for protection and refuge to their fellow-creedsmen dwelling on the Lebanon; and since that period it is only in these

parts exclusively that Druse settlements are to be encountered. The fugitives were received with the greatest cordiality and kindness, and a considerable sum of money was raised amongst the Druses of Mount Lebanon, who also allotted to the strangers convenient dwellings in various parts of the mountains, to recompense them, in some measure, for the severe sufferings they had undergone, and for the loss of home and patrimony.

It fortunately happened for these refugees that some years before they had been compelled to seek a home and protection amongst their co-religionists, there had been a considerable emigration of Druse families from the Lebanon, when nearly six hundred families migrated to the mountains of Houran, which border upon the Syrian Desert and Arabia Deserta. The vacancy occasioned by so great an emigration had left much country uncultivated, and many villages depopulated: it was therefore an easy matter, within the clearly-defined confines of their own territory, to bestow lands and villages upon imigrants; and apart from that clannish tie which so links the Druses together, they were glad to add to their strength and independence by so considerable a reinforcement, especially at so critical a period, when the whole of Turkey and Egypt was convulsed with internal discord, and threatened with invasion from various parts, and when the recent massacre of the Mamelukes had spread terror and consternation throughout the country.

Unity is universally acknowledged to constitute strength, and with the Druses this maxim has been well illustrated through many years of harassing, but futile, attempts to suppress their liberty. They have retained and still retain that liberty, which to them is dearer than life itself, though to preserve it they are content to quit the more fertile plains and luxuriant pasturages of Syria and Palestine, and to content themselves with their mountain retreat.

Ibrahim Pasha was, perhaps, the only prince who has ever obtained a temporary advantage over them; but in all other respects they have lived an untaxed people, submitting only, and that with very bad grace, to the necessity imposed upon them of supplying a certain ratio of young men for the conscription necessary for the maintenance of the Sultan's army. But even here, so hateful has this system of forced soldiery been considered, that it has often been the source of open and violent demonstration; and so lately as the year 1850, when recruiting was going on to a considerable extent in Damascus and Aleppo, and when in the last city, acting upon the outraged feelings of the more discontented populace, a band of fanatics stirred up that terrible tragedy which cost so many lives and ruined so many families.

Taking advantage of this state of affairs, the whole population of the mountains rose *en masse;* and driving out all recruiting parties, not only defied them to carry the conscription into their mountain haunts, but even threatened to pour down upon the plains and surround-

ing towns. The whole of Beyrout was consequently thrown into a state of fermentation and excitement that lasted nearly a week, and every preparation was made to guard against an attack from the mountains. But although always ready and able to resent oppression, the Druses are faithful and sincere allies; witness the earnest sincerity with which they have embraced the Sultan's cause in the present struggle between the Turks and the Russians.

In 1840, at the period when the Egyptians were being expelled from Syria by the allied powers, the whole of the Druse villages were in a state of uproar and confusion, and the mountains were impassable to travellers. It so chanced that several of the sons of the most respectable of the Druses had been forced into Ibrahim Pasha's service, where some of them held honourable office. Availing himself of this fact, the crafty Egyptian prince sent word to the mountains that if any Druse stirred hand or foot in favour of the Turks or their allies, those Druses in the power of Ibrahim Pasha should be instantly led forth and shot. In this predicament it was difficult to know how to act, for the Turks from Sidon were summoning the assistance of the Druses; whilst Europeans invited the Emir to co-operate both stratagetically and with his armed forces; and it seemed a breach of good faith not to answer readily to their call. On the other hand, they were so familiar with the character of the Egyptian general, that they knew full well that any demonstra-

tion on their part, contrary to the interests of Egypt, would be tantamount to signing the death warrant of every Druse then serving in the army of Ibrahim Pasha. The result of this unfortunate predicament was a surmise prejudicial to the honour and integrity of this brave people, who never for an instant wavered in intention though they were compelled to remain neutral, being idle spectators of a struggle in which they would willingly have chosen a side, had the force of circumstances permitted them.

It was Burkhardt's opinion, that if a crafty and subtle politician could be found among the Emirs—one who by opposing the Druses tribe to tribe might weaken their mutual authority, power, and confidence,—this man, supported as he would be by all the Christians, and eventually by all the Druse tribes, would be enabled to constitute a dominion—a princedom on the top of Lebanon, which would be impregnable as regards its independence, and set at defiance all the forces that Turkey or Egypt could send against it. The natural position, the fertility and resources of the country, are such, that these people might live entirely independent of the plains; whilst their natural barriers preclude the possibility of the mountains being carried so long as men could be found to protect the passes and ravines.

Sacred to the Druses of Lebanon are the cities Ammatam and Bachlin. These are rallying points, where in time of trouble and warfare the tribes meet and swear allegiance to each and their cause, standing in their

khaloue or mosques, where all the books of their faith are guarded religiously and with jealous zeal. In Anti-Lebanon Hasbeya and Rosheya answer the same purpose; and whenever anything is astir, anything going wrong, or anything suspicious, from these beacon points the news is telegraphed throughout the Druse districts with startling rapidity. Bonfires lit at various points signify various items of startling intelligence, and when anything terrible is approaching,—an enemy's force or a struggle between Druses and Christians,—then the scene these mountains present is wild and picturesque beyond description. Our friend Shein gave us an eloquent description of what he personally witnessed in one of the earlier and fiercer struggles amongst these mountain tribes; when treachery, under the garb of friendship, lurked under every bush and tree; and when the torrents, to use the metaphor of our host, seemed to flow like poisoned water, so bitter and insincere were the hands that washed in them, and the lips that quenched their thirst thereat. But to come to the point at once. We quote verbatim, as near as we can recollect, the occurrences of an *émeute* on these mountains, witnessed and participated in by our host.

SHEIN'S ACCOUNT OF A DRUSE INSURRECTION.

Something had gone wrong for a week or more, yet no one knew what, or nobody cared to ask how; still it was silently evident to every individual dwelling on

the Lebanon. What can be more terrible than the silent dictates of thought and conscience, that something must have happened to interrupt the harmony of every-day intercourse, and that a dark cloud was suspended over the villages and towns ready to burst forth and sweep down the mountain sides in torrents of fierce strife and bloodshed? Even the vulture, keenly sensible of this, seemed to hover longer in his diurnal track from mountain summit to mountain peak, as though expectant and yet disappointed of the looked-for prey. Mothers and young brides huddled closer together whenever the darker shades of night gathered in over the village; and as for the children, they seemed to have forgotten their usual love of sport and fun; or growing suddenly melancholy, they kept close under cottage walls, or ran home like startled deer when any sudden echo made their hearts palpitate with fear. Why all this should be so, nobody seemed to care to seek for information.

The same change had been upon the mountain-tops five or six years before this period, and men looked nervous, and scowled, whilst women turned pale and crouched nearer to their fire, as the terrible recollection of what had then followed upon this gloom, flashed across their minds; and they felt certain that sooner or later, in a few hours, or at furthest a day or two, the same tragedy would be re-enacted, though it was impossible to say who were to be the actors this time, who the spectators, who surviving the last act of the

drama might present its horrid scenery to children of an unborn generation.

All the birds seemed to have forsaken the mountains, and the very honey bee had carried off its store of sweetness, fearing some dreadful pending catastrophy; at least if it had not, it seemed to us to have done so, for—God help us!—every pulsation of the heart seemed to strike an ominous note of warning, and every voice to cry out, The Philistines be upon us! The sun had set, bathing its last rays in the snows of Lebanon, and the frugal repasts of the villagers had been partaken of. The wind, which generally of an evening blows pleasant and refreshing up here, had forgotten to visit us as early as usual; possibly he was stopping to make love to some wild rose, or may be he had forgotten his *sac de nuit*, and his night-cap; however this may be, it is certain he never came at all—and this may be taken as a mark of wisdom, for death must have been hovering over the place that night. At any rate we missed the breeze, and the intense stifling atmosphere of the night rendered the search for repose or sleep a fruitless task; so every inmate of every house rolled about listlessly on the floors, hoping soon that he should hear the merry rustlings of branches and leaves of trees, as the night breeze danced merrily over them.

I went out once just to see what kind of night it seemed, and I don't think I ever saw the stars looking more brilliant, or at a less distance from the earth.

Intense solitude prevailed everywhere; every leaf of the sturdiest tree stood out in bold relief against the clear bespangled canopy of heaven; even the very cricket seemed spell-bound, and the owl and the jackal were nowhere to be heard; far away, looming through the haze of night, was the snow on various peaks and higher passes. I crept slowly and sadly to my bed again, for there was something horrible and saddening in such a perfect stagnation of nature; it seemed as if the whole machinery of the universe had come to a standstill.

After the lapse of about half an hour, however, I was just dosing off, and I know my wife was asleep for I heard her snoring distinctly; suddenly I seemed to awake to the perception of a very distant, very imperfect, very uncertain sound; and yet, though for the life of me I could not at that moment remember what it was, I knew I had heard it somewhere before; and this knowledge instinctively seemed to arouse me up. Another second, and the sound was repeated, still distant and indistinct, but beyond doubt the same as I had heard before: I raised my head gently from my pillow, and leaning it upon the palm of my hand, tried vainly to recall to mind where I had heard that horrid sound before, or why it made my heart leap so with anxiety and vague alarm. A third time the thing came louder and more distinct than ever, floating like ice upon that silent night air, and freezing my blood as it sped by. I instantly jumped up, and

ran out of doors: there, where half an hour before I had silently contemplated the intensely quiet picture, what a change had come over the scene! A red glare shot up on every mountain height, and was instantly answered by dozens of minor beacons in all directions; so that the whole firmament seemed to have taken fire, the reflection of which was peculiarly bright on the snow. As beacon light after beacon light spread the alarm, the cry arose for warriors and horsemen to arm themselves; criers ran up to the mountain tops and those perspicuous places were the beacons glared, and thence they summoned their creedsmen to arms. Catching at the words wafted from hill top to hill top, I ran to our own village beacon, and instantly kindled it. This aroused all the villagers, and I summoned them in the names of our chiefs and elders, to buckle on their swords and seize their lances, for the Philistines were advancing against us.

Deir Yacoub was the rendezvous appointed for the Druse forces to meet, and thither we immediately repaired, leaving our wives and children in the charge of some of the elders, who conducted them to places of safety and refuge. Before light had broken in upon the east, the forces of the Maronites had clambered over to within musket shot of where we were assembled, but every hour brought us reinforcements, so that within twelve hours from the first alarm and summons, upwards of twelve thousand Druses had congregated in one spot; and we turned the line of attack, com-

pelling our invaders to retreat within their own bounds, and ultimately to sue for peace. But sometimes they in their turn have had the better of us, and even this time there was no cause for rejoicing: many a stout-hearted Druse, who had started up suddenly, as I had, rushing away impetuously from wife and home, and everything dear to him, was carried home again inanimate dust. No wonder then that that cry was terribly familiar to me; no wonder that the people and everything around us seemed grave and sad, when it was secretly known to every one that that war-cry might be hourly expected! And though I hope it will always find me, so long as energy and health remain, ready and active in obedience to its call, I must acknowledge that I never wish again to hear its hateful echo in these mountains.

So concludes our Druse, and to his last exclamation we say Amen! hoping sincerely, that amongst other benefits that may accrue to Turkey from the results of the present war, we may live to see a happy and comfortable settlement of the rights and grievances, respectively, of the Druses and the Maronites; so that, their interests never again clashing, they may find no cause or necessity for ever resorting to open warfare.

CHAPTER XIV.

CHARACTER OF THE DRUSES—DICTATES OF CONSCIENCE—THE ORDER OF AKAL—THE "CHIEF OF THE STARS"—LAW OF DIVORCE—LAW OF INHERITANCE—DRUSE CADI—RIGHTS OF HOSPITALITY—DJEZZAR PASHA—DIVISION INTO CLASSES—DOMESTIC DUTIES—BIRTHS—THE PRACTICE OF SERENADING—CHILDREN'S CRADLES—SUPERSTITIONS—DIET AMONG THE DRUSES—DREAD OF SUSPICION.

"Sir," said he, "a desire of knowledge is the natural feeling of mankind; and every human being, whose mind is not debauched, will be willing to give all that he has, to get knowledge."

BOSWELL'S LIFE OF JOHNSON.

THE Druses, though not the most numerous, are acknowledged to be the most warlike and courageous people inhabiting the Lebanon; and occupying all the southern portion, the western slope of Anti-Lebanon and G'bl il Sheik, they have upwards of forty large towns and villages inhabited exclusively by themselves, and nearly two hundred and thirty villages occupied by a mixed population of Druses and Christians; whilst in Anti-Lebanon they are also possessed of nearly eighty exclusively Druse villages. The country about these parts may be said to be almost uniformly successive hillock and vale, every position affording a means of security, and excluding the fear of invasion.

The general aspect of their country is that of land in a high state of cultivation, for even in rocky parts and sterile ground, grape plants and hardy fig trees are planted and hide the natural disadvantages of the soil. Nor in a moral point of view are the Druses one whit behind the advanced and civilised appearance of their country. They possess all the principal ingredients of civilisation, for they are industrious, bold, enterprising, courageous, honest, and honorable, in a way which will not admit of comparison with any other native tribe inhabiting the mountains.

Their only failing or grand want is a proper notion or appreciation of real religion. Under their present system of belief in a heterogeneous code unskilfully gleaned from all known sources of faith, or all heard-of creeds upon the earth, they lamentably lack that strength of principle which ought to be the foundation or turning point of every action or thought in life. They are possessed of the will to be honorable and just; they claim the inclination to be honest; but they have nothing to fall back upon which applauds such resolutions or encourages their furtherance and perseverance. With them all the virtues they possess are much more the results of a happy and natural sagacity, than the fruits of example, advice, or precedents; for they possess no universities or public schools for the inculcation of morals and learning, and their most learned doctors are babblers of what they themselves cannot possibly comprehend. Yet it is this very unfathomable

mystery of their own religion which ever remains an incomprehensible theme to themselves, and serves as a cloak to the ignorance of their elders, which acts as a spell in restraining within certain limits of discretion and decorum all the actions and deeds of the Druses.

Indeed from what can be gleaned from the theory appended to this work, it would seem as though the dictates of conscience were the principal monitors which point out to the Druse what things to do and what to avoid; and though with some glaring exceptions they have no defined rules or laws to restrict them, the fear of that power which is supposed to envelope the penetration of those learned in their faith, and the spell which mystery invariably casts upon ignorance, mentally restrain them from the commission of many acts which though perpetrated in secret, and escaping flagrant detection, would, they superstitiously imagine, inevitably entail their own punishment.

Thus far this very mystery is a boon to the people, more desirable than the clearer precepts and theories of other people when undue power is invested in narrow-minded and uneducated priestcraft, or equally viciously-disposed Imams or Sheiks who, under the cloak of religious duty, exercise only the dictates of vengeance, avarice, or self-aggrandisement. It is, therefore, far better that the Druses should remain disciples of their own mysterious faith till such time as a fair opportunity presents itself for their being converted to

a belief holy in its principle, unshakeable in its theory, and which has for its aim the amelioration of both the present and future state of man, and is shackled by none of those selfish principles which are so universally mixed up with all other doctrines but that of the true Church.

Although various sects are said to exist amongst the Druses, who oftentimes have violent disputes amongst themselves relative to religious questions, their interests are so mutually bound together that they all unite under one head, whenever anything threatens to interfere with their liberties, or to injure them as an independent body. But the whole class admits of only two grand divisions, Akals and the D'ghahils; the former constituting that class who are supposed to be conversant with the Druse religion, the latter all the rest.

Of the former are constituted the clergy, and the learned doctors and elders; these superintend the ordinances of worship, and instruct the children in the elements of their religion. One distinguishing mark of this class is the extreme simplicity of their costumes, they being forbidden to wear any article of gold or silk, whilst their language must be in accordance with their calling, and swearing or abusive language unfits them for their positions. Many of the women are admitted into this order, which some of them adopt from parsimony, as they are then exempted from the necessity of wearing the tantour or of indulging in

such expensive dresses as the higher classes usually adopt.

Another singular feature of this class of Druses is their refusing to receive money, or to partake of food, in any other Druse's house, lest such food or money should have come by improper means into the hands of the donor. Consequently, when they have sums of money due to them for the produce of their vineyards, or for the sale of their silk crop, they invariably employ a third party to change such money into other coins, so that the cash they pocket cannot be directly associated with the original donor or purchaser.

A great man amongst the Druses is their astrologer, the Sheik il N'goum, or the Chief of the Stars, who usually accompanies the Druse Sheik upon all visits of ceremony, being invariably consulted upon all undertakings to which any weight or importance is attached.

From what our host tells us, in a secret and confidential whisper, as though afraid that all the heads of the villages should overhear and punish him for the divulgence, we discover that the Khaloues, or edifices erected for their worship, are simple and in keeping with the general aspect of the people themselves and their manners. The exterior of the buildings differ but little from the ordinary run of Druse houses, perhaps only with the exception of being whitewashed or plastered with lime. They are usually situated apart from the villages upon some commanding position, whence, by the means of sentries, they are secure from

sudden interruption, or the prying propensities of the inquisitive, when in the discharge of the secret duties of their religion. Inside, the flooring is covered with a rush mat, and they have invariably a basin filled by a running stream, which is doubtless used during some portion of their ceremonials, but our Druse will not tell us how or when; and in some of the larger and more important Khaloues the walls are decorated with the most grotesque specimens of rude art, highly-coloured figures of men, women, children, birds and beasts, all badly executed, but which may doubtless some day prove a clue to some incident of their past history, when in future and more enlightened days another Robinson shall investigate their secrets and astonish the generation of that date with a book of revelations.

With regard to the *code moral* of the Druses, they are in most things subjected to the prevailing law of the land; but they have some peculiarities, some fragments of their own, which are rigidly adhered to in all cases and tacitly acknowledged by the Turkish authorities. Amongst these we may mention the law of divorce, which, though simple in practice, is seldom put into execution. According to the strict letter, however, if a wife leave her husband's abode without an injunction to return again, this is tantamount to a divorce, and however willing both parties may be to re-unite they cannot again be brought together till the woman be first married again according to the Turkish

rites and ceremonials, to a third party, who must then divorce her; after this she is at liberty to return to her first husband, but as we said before, this absurd practice is seldom put into execution, and the Druses, as well as other nations, have found law so expensive and ruinous a process that they will never resort to it if they can by any possible means compromise matters among themselves.

There is another strange law very binding upon the Druses, and one which, in its effect and working, is to a certain extent productive of good, though it may be as well to premise that quarrels between fathers and sons are of very rare occurrence indeed. Still no father has the power entirely to disinherit a son, but there is a clause which renders this law null and void, and ludicrous in its institution; for although no man can entirely disinherit his son, he has the privilege of being entitled to leave him only a solitary mulberry tree, which is *de facto* tantamount to leaving him nothing at all, yet without which a will would be invalid and be set aside in favour of the heir-at-law.

There is always a Druse Cadi residing at Deir-il-Kamar, and this post has been inherited from father to son through many ages; but the learning of the present representative is so little appreciated, that all causes of importance are carried before the Emir or Sheik.

The rite of circumcision is not practised by the Druses. But the most remarkable feature in the character of the Druse, and the one which admits of no comparison

amongst other nations, is their jealous appropriation of the rights of hospitality, which they look upon as most sacred and binding, and refugees from all parts of Syria are continually in the practice of availing themselves of this protection; for from the moment they set foot upon the territory of the Emir they are considered as free from persecution or pursuit. Volney, whilst speaking of this peculiar feature of the Druses, informs us that an Agha of the Janissaries, having been engaged in a rebellion at the close of the eighteenth century, fled from Damascus, and retired among the Druses. The Pasha was informed of this, and demanded him of the Emir, threatening to make war upon the latter in case of refusal. The Emir demanded him of the Sheik with whom he had taken refuge, but the latter indignantly refused to give him up, returning for answer, that he desired to be informed whether the Emir had ever known a Druse surrender his guest. "Tell the Emir," said the Sheik, "that so long as I shall preserve my beard, not a hair of the head of my guest shall fall." The Emir threatened him with force; the Sheik armed his family; and the Emir, dreading a revolt, adopted a method practised as juridical in that country. He declared to the Sheik that he would cut down fifty of his mulberry trees daily until the Agha was given up. He proceeded as far as a thousand, and the Sheik still remained inflexible; at length the other Sheiks became incensed and took up the quarrel, and the commotion was about to become general, when

the Agha, reproaching himself for having been the cause of so much mischief, escaped from the mountains without the knowledge of his protector."

It is well known, even at the present day, that should the prince ever be tempted by bribery or any other causes to deliver up any man who had sought and found protection amongst the Druses, the whole country would rise to frustrate such a breach of hospitality, and prevent such a stain upon their national reputation. Even that dreadful miscreant Djezzar Pasha, whose name spread terror all over the East, and whose deeds of infamy have been unrivalled in the calends of cruelty, even this man, who had invested the government of the mountains in the hands of his own creatures, never could force them to give up a single refugee; they protected him so long as they were able, and when threatened with imminent danger assisted him in effecting his escape to the remotest parts of the empire.

As a more recent evidence of the tenacity with which the Druses adhere to this privilege, I may be pardoned for referring to an incident which occurred to my own father and some of his friends, whilst travelling in these mountains in 1840, the more especially as it proves that these Druses are also capable of evincing their gratitude for any kindnesses received, when the opportunity presents itself.

It so happened, that the gentleman in question, in company with some ladies and other friends, had visited

Damascus, and being about to return to Beyrout, they had arrived as far as Deir-il-Kamar when that terrible revolution broke out upon the mountains, which we have already referred to, and which rendered it equally dangerous to return, go forward, or to remain. In this predicament my father, who had been many years a resident at Beyrout, and who in his official consular capacity had had frequent intercourse with the Sheiks of the Druses, often favouring and befriending them, now applied to one of them for advice and protection in their present dilemma.

The Sheik he applied to chanced to be an old friend, and immediately exerted himself to secure the safe passage of the travellers down to Beyrout. Through his influence a considerable escort was obtained, and under the sacred influence and appellation of guests, the strangers were guided through the most difficult defiles and passes, and arrived scathless at Beyrout, none of the contending parties attempting to interfere with or arrest their progress; a fact which was all the more remarkable, since Europeans were held in detestation by the Egyptian forces which then occupied the country they were about being forced to evacuate.

In the ordinary relations of life the Druses are divided into three distinct classes, consisting of the emirs, or princes, the sheiks or hereditary chiefs, and the zelmat or lower orders; and between these three there exist all those ordinances of *etiquette* which are necessary for the maintenance of their respective ranks, being a

reciprocal acknowledgment of each other's peculiar station and calling in life. They are very proud of their public reputation, and nothing can escape the retaliating vengeance of a Druse when he has been publicly abused or insulted in a street. In this respect they are very similar to the Malays, ever craving for a retaliation, and not caring what sacrifices they make to gratify their revenge. But as this failing is well known amongst all people frequenting the mountains, it seldom if ever happens that a brawl occurs in public.

In the domestic duties of life the Druse might be held up as an example to other people, the generality of the men being kind husbands and fond parents, the wives dutiful, affectionate, and extremely devoted to their children.

The birth of a child in a Druse's house, whether it be son or daughter, always gives rise to manifestations of joy and rejoicings. When a son is born, all the men of the village assemble at the father's house to felicitate him upon the happy event, whilst the women are equally active in giving vent to their congratulations by resorting to the noises we have already described at weddings.

Upon such occasions the whole wealth of the store-room is ransacked to set before the guests such dainties as can be afforded; sweetmeats and nuts, dried fruit, etc., with coffee, are liberally dispensed, whilst the women, entering within doors, come in for their share of good things.

This liberal expenditure, however, is only occasioned

by the birth of a son. A girl is hailed only by the noisy acclamations of the women; and though, in this respect, better welcomed and more esteemed than the generality of girls born in native huts in Syria, there is still a kind of dumb show of regret which seems tacitly to indicate that the father would much sooner have hailed the advent of a son, though compelled to content himself with what has been sent him.

The most romantic incident connected with the birth of a Druse child is the practice of serenading the new-born child soon after its birth, when a few friends assemble, the rest of the village being hushed in sleep, and sing appropriate verses of welcome upon the occasion.

Excepting only in cases of death, children are invariably reared by their own mothers; but where the nutriment proves insufficient, they do not hesitate to feed infants upon goat's milk, which is administered by means of a simple glass bottle.

It is surprising and remarkable at what an early age the Druse children begin to cater for themselves. Possessed of a naturally robust constitution, and with an iron digestion, children that have barely cut their first teeth are permitted to eat of everything which the Druse himself partakes of; whether it be fruit, or meat, or vegetables, it little signifies, they eat to repletion, and that apparently without any inconvenience resulting therefrom, and the only effect of this repletion is an inclination to quiet or sleep, so that food would seem to act as an opiate upon the Druse child.

After they have finished their mid-day repast, it is the first care of the young Druse mother to prepare her child's cradle, and these cradles are constituted after the most primitive fashion, and of the most simple material. In fine weather they are usually slung under some trees nearest to the house, in winter from pole to pole that serve as props for the roof; and the whole material consists of two stout ropes with a bit of old carpet stretched across the centre. In this carpet, being supplied with a cushion, the child is placed, covered over with anything that comes first to hand, and secured from tumbling out by having a shawl wound round and round it; a thin gauze handkerchief is thrown over the child's face to protect it from flies, and it is the duty of some one member of the family to keep the cradle swinging. In addition to this, every family has a wooden cradle of the ordinary sort, in which the child sleeps when it has outgrown its swaddling clothes.

Connected with these cradles are many superstitions which prevail amongst all classes inhabiting the East. Of these the most prominent is the belief that it is worse than fatal to the future health and welfare of the child, should any one attempt to rock the cradle when it is empty. A mother will hardly forgive any one guilty of such an atrocity; for according to their superstitions, evil spirits, which are always on the look out, and which are remarkably fond of having a swing, will be sure to jump into a cradle when it begins to rock, if it should chance to be empty, and having once got in will remain

there invisibly, torturing and pinching the child till it teazes it into sickness and death.

It is a fallacious idea, and one wholly unsupported by fact, that the Druses are addicted to raw meat, eating the livers and hearts of sheep with cannibal-like gusto whenever they can get them. Our friend, Abou Shein, denies the charge with indignation and horror, but he acknowledges to a failing prevalent amongst all natives of all creeds, and which probably originated the absurd report; this is eating the kubbé in its uncooked or raw condition. But this changes the matter materially, for though the meat in the kubbé has not in that state been exposed to the fire, it cannot any longer be said to be in a raw condition, since it has been first of all minced up into the finest imaginable particles, mixed with pepper, salt, and burghol, and then so unmercifully pounded and beaten in a mortar that the whole substances have amalgamated into one thick paste, and can no more be considered crude.

The foregoing account amounts to all the local information that we can obtain from our host relative to the manners and customs of his own people; and though willing and ready to oblige in the extreme, we can perceive that it is no congenial task we have imposed upon him, and therefore we desist from further questionings. Moreover he says that Europeans in general, and Englishmen in particular, usually keep their eyes and ears wide open wherever they go, and that many incidents which might escape the observation or be thought unworthy

of notice by a Druse, would infallibly fall under our scrutiny and criticism.

We are persuaded that the Druse looks upon our inquiries as the prelude to a regular catechism which would tire and exhaust his patience, besides exposing him to the suspicion and ill will of his neighbours; and as by this time the drowsy villagers are recovering from the effects of last night's revelry, and lounging about in lazy listlessness, ready to pick up and misconstrue any stray word or sentence, he deems it prudent to beat a retreat. Dinner is accordingly ordered to be prepared half an hour earlier than the usual time, and in this interval he undertakes to rub up and feed our horses so that they may be ready for their saddles when we shall start hence, an hour after noon, on our way to the village of Ainab.

CHAPTER XV.

LEAVE-TAKING — DEPARTURE FROM K'FARCHIMA — DISAGREEABLE ENCOUNTERS — CRITICAL POSITION — ENCOUNTER WITH A MULETEER — HYPOCRITICAL ESSAYS — MOUNTAIN TRAVELLING — APPROACH TO AINAB — HUNGRY TROOPS OF JACKALS — ARRIVAL AT AINAB — THE RECEPTION HALL OF THE SHEIK — PRINCELY HOSPITALITY — SHEIK EBN HAMDAN — AN ASSEMBLY OF NATIVES — THE ARABIC LANGUAGE.

> "Oh, oh!" quoth my friend, "he'll come in a trice,
> He's keeping a corner for something that's nice:
> There's a *piastre*."
>
> GOLDSMITH.

We soon leave the scene of all the late wedding festivities behind us, as winding round Karkafé, the road that we pursue secludes from sight all vestiges of the village. It is not likely that during our present tour we shall be induced to come back this way again, and the chances are that never in the course of human life, we shall converse with, or mingle amongst those whom a few hours' sojourn has rendered as familiar as friends of many years' standing. We have eaten and slept, drunk and rejoiced, with the inmates of our host's house, and partaken of the hilarity of their neighbours.

During this brief interval, therefore, we have been initiated into all that even a Druse himself, in the ordinary course of affairs, will witness seldom oftener than once in six months or so; consequently, it is not without some sentiment of regret that we turn our back upon the abodes of hospitality and kindness; nor are the natives themselves deficient in demonstrating their respect and esteem for us, by congregating at the door of our host's house to witness our departure.

The strange echo of our unfamiliar voices will long have subsided into nothingness, before we are entirely forgotten by the humble and industrious denizens of the mountain village. The bright eye of the heroine of our imaginary romance, and equally fabulous Fiddlefaddle patronage, is dimmed by the transient cloud of sorrow, as she presses our hands fervently to her lips, and implores a blessing upon us, wherever we may roam or dwell.

Possibly she recalls to mind the startling fact revealed to her of the liberties and enjoyments of women in our own free land of happiness, and she may momentarily regret that her lot has not been cast amongst us; at any rate the novelty of being made something of, of being treated as an equal, and conversed with on familiar terms, has inspired her with a gratitude which will not easily be erased from her memory. Even the mother and the smaller children cluster around us, as though sorry to lose a plaything, the latter particularly lamenting being

compelled to part with our capacious hats, which have proved to them a source of great amusement.

However, we get over the ceremony of parting as speedily as we can, for somehow or other there is always a dismal dreariness linked up with leave-taking, and it is a solemn reflection upon the instability of human affairs, to know that we are looking upon a thing, let it be ever so trifling, for the last time. However, luckily for human nature, everything in the path of life resembles forcibly the path of nature. Rain and clouds are always succeeded by sunshine; and so the fair daughter of our Druse, though heavy in spirit at the present moment, will wake up to-morrow more joyous than ever, remembering our visit only as a pleasant incident of past life, and industriously plying the shuttle to complete, one hour earlier if possible, the mystic woollen scarf which she is busily weaving against the day when some yet unknown gallant shall appear at her father's door, to demand it of her, as a token of submission and acquiescence.

So we ride on in solitude, lost for the time being in a deep reverie; but our friend Abou Shein, who acts as our guide and companion, soon recalls stray thoughts from their wool-gathering occupation, by inviting attention to the scenery around. In addition to this, our road is so precarious that self-protection, and the care of the animal we ride, wholly engross every other sentiment.

We have reached the high road, and continue along

a well-beaten track ; yet, for all its being frequented by continual caravans of mules and camels, travellers, and casual passengers, the road itself is of the vilest description. For the first hour or so, the ground we pass over is of an undulating nature, full of loose crumbling stones, or slippery slabs of rock, with every here and there a frightfully narrow edge terminating in a precipice on one side, and an abrupt rocky wall on the other. But our horses are well accustomed to this method of travelling, and pick out their way with remarkable sagacity and instinct. By and by the country becomes more open, the ascents greater, the descents more precipitous, but the roads still continue as bad as ever.

We have not proceeded very far before, coming in an opposite direction, and laden with huge beams of timber, stalks a caravan of camels, swinging and rocking about like ships in a heavy sea, as they pass over narrow and dangerous portions of the road, or tottering again under their heavy burthens, as forced to walk down precipitous hill-sides.

It is no pleasant sensation to feel yourself seated on a horse which is clambering up an almost vertical hill, with the loose soil and gravel sliding away from under every hoof, as the tired and frightened animal exerts every sinew in its efforts to reach the top; but far more disagreeable is it when you have got just half way up,—and it is equally perilous, if not more so, to stop your horse and attempt to return,—to find to your

utter consternation and dismay a caravan of these camels coming down overhead. Every step they take seems to threaten you with instant annihilation; for if by any chance they slipped and fell, nothing human could save one from destruction; and, moreover, being aware of the perilous nature of the descent, nothing will induce them to budge one inch out of the direct line they are pursuing, so that it remains only for the horse to scramble to one side or the other, as these leviathans of the desert approach.

To add to the confusion and dismay of the moment, the camel drivers come down hooting and screaming, as though well persuaded that nothing but utter destruction awaits the caravan; so that if in the turmoil you neglect to give your horse its own way, and vigorously pull the bridle, the chances are ten to one that you are rolled over in the dust, and sent flying, horse and all, to the bottom of the hill.

But in our instance we are free from all cares on this head; Abou Shein is an experienced guide, and the horses we ride are possessed of the instinct gained by fifty journeys over these very paths; so that we always manage to avoid coming into contact with any caravan in these disagreeable localities, where the choice only remains of running the risk of either being squeezed to death on one side, or jerked over the precipice on the other.

During these rencontres we cannot fail observing one great characterestic of the natives of these moun-

tains, and that is their amazing addiction to and love of gossip. On every occasion, and however small the convoy, the muleteers, or camel drivers, or solitary horsemen, as the case may be, will invariably turn back, as soon as their animals are out of harm's way, and enter into five minutes' conversation, the general run of which conversations may be gleaned from that passing between Abou Shein and the head muleteer of a caravan of fifty mules, which have just disentangled themselves in a most miraculous manner from a portion of the road so narrow that the projecting rocks on either side required each burthen to be shifted to a perpendicular position, as the animals passed ; yet, notwithstanding all this care, one fractious mule, ungovernable, or naturally vicious, and which started off at full speed just at the critical moment, has managed to damage the whole of its burthen,—witness the fragments scattered around us, which once constituted a Spanish guitar, the only solace of some unfortunate lady on the mountains during her hours of solitary exile.

The old muleteer, who approaches Shein cautiously on his donkey, and who is full of wrath at the misconduct of the mule, besides being much addicted to strong language, commences the dialogue with a blessing. "*Allah y'koon maakom,*" (God be with you,) says the muleteer, addressing our guide and ourselves. We return the salutation with becoming dignity. "Did you see that child of a Gin ?" expostulates the old man ; "did you witness his freaks ? By the eyebrows of the

prophet, two hundred piastres will not cover the loss I have sustained. May a donkey sit on his father's grave!" Our Druse friend consoles the muleteer, by assuring him that such accidents are of frequent occurrence, and that the fault is more of the road than of the animal.

Pacified by this, he offers his tobacco bag to the Druse and begs him to fill pipes round with it, which we accordingly do; and whilst thus occupied he carries on a whispering discourse with our guide, endeavouring to find out who we are and whither we are going to; and being satisfied on these points, he remains silent a few seconds, smoking furiously the while, and plotting secretly upon what possible pretext he may ask for a *baksheesh*. Suddenly he is seized with the most intense civility and assiduity; the girths of our saddle appear to him not sufficiently drawn, though the horses, in our opinion, think otherwise, to secure our safety on so perilous a road; so whether we will or not, he loosens them and fastens them again, and then there is something in the bridle that attracts his attention.

Finding that these mute shows are unsuccessful in producing the desired effect, he changes the system of by-play, and seating himself upon a fragment of rock, sinks, forthwith, ten fathoms deep into sorrows and lamentations. Very suddenly the picture of the unknown lady whose guitar has been smashed into fragments, rises like a threatening apparition before his mind, and he assures us with all the

mockery of acute anguish that he has not a para in the world to bless himself with, illustrating his poverty by a singular action, peculiar to these people, which consists of rasping the thumb nail against the front teeth, by forcing the hand away from the mouth, which is supposed to indicate a state of despicable pauperism.

However, we quote an English proverb, and translating the same for the benefit of the crafty muleteer, we tell him that "old birds are seldom caught with chaff;" but as, crestfallen, he steals away to rejoin his mules, we call him back again, and gladden his old eyes by the donation of a piastre or two. For after all, there is no doubt that the man will be a sufferer from the vagrancy of his mule ; and he has acted his part so well, that he merits a trifling recompense.

By frequent encounters, such as these, our time has slipped away pleasantly enough ; so that we are unexpectedly gratified by a sudden bend in the mountains bringing us in sight of a singular clump of palm trees, which are a rare spectacle at so great an elevation from the sea, and which consequently serve as an infallible beacon to indicate the whereabouts of the village of Ainab. But nothing is more deceptive than distance on these mountains, for whilst apparently within a quarter of an hour's ride of the village of our destination, we are in reality separated from it by interminable windings and turnings in the road, and an infinity of valleys and hills, which being on a lower

elevation than ourselves, do not present to the casual spectator the absolute stumbling block they prove to our speedier progress.

Of this, however, we have ample demonstration as we ride along; for we have no sooner arrived at the bottom of one glen, and hope on reaching the summit of the hill before us to see the village beneath our feet, than this hope is speedily blighted by the dreary realization of another glen and another hill, and so on to the end of the chapter. The road is abominable beyond endurance; bad enough at mid-day, and in the best season of the year; intolerable now that the shades of night are rapidly obscuring objects around us, and a cold mountain mist hangs over the place.

The last lark, who kept it up five minutes later than its companions, has finished its vesper song, and crept into its snug warm moss-lined nest, and we are still upon the road. It is impossible now to distinguish objects around us, or to state with any certainty the moment we may find ourselves deposited at the bottom of a precipice; so that in this uncomfortable mood of mind, our only consolation is our sure-footed animals, and the recklessness of the guide, who, inured to like hardships from infancy, plods along in the dark half asleep upon his mule, quite certain that whatever happens it will not be for want of care or instinct on the part of the animal.

By and by, a joyful sound in our dark solitude, is heard the distant barking of some village dog, and

even our very horses prick up their ears, as a mark of recognition. But this only lasts for a few seconds; the dog stops barking, and the silence is more intense than ever, till our situation is rendered less enviable by the fact of our finding ourselves surrounded by hungry packs of yelling jackals, while the frightened horses huddle closer together, as though for mutual security, and our guide fires off his pistol to dismay the intruders. In an instant their yelling is hushed, and we can easily guess their numbers by the pattering noise of their feet, as they beat a retreat over the mountain sides. There is a sudden flash followed by the distant report of fire-arms: our guide's pistol has been heard and responded to by some of the natives of the village; two minutes afterwards we can distinctly hear the jingling of goat's bells, indicating that there is a pen somewhere in this neighbourhood. Still the darkness continues as impenetrable as ever; yet the horses grope their way through it with miraculous precision. There is more barking of dogs, and this time an indistinct hum of human voices, when passing round a projecting angle in the road, we come upon a sudden glare of light; and there stands a solitary and half-ruined old building where the hubbub of voices is very great.

Stopping to inquire the cause, we learn that some shepherds, who made this ruin a dwelling place for the summer, have been subjected to the roguish incursions of the jackals, and that very moment they have dis-

covered the loss of a fine fat hen, many days reckoned upon as the principal ingredient of a feast destined to be held here some day next week. Leaving the irate shepherds to adopt plans for retaliating upon the jackals, we pass down a steep ravine, and arriving at the bottom, find ourselves in the centre of the village of our destination. *Il ham'd'l Allah!* exclaims our guide, as he dismounts wearily from his jaded animal. We follow his example, in every sense too happy to think that we have arrived safe in limb, and where unbounded hospitality makes ample compensation for our sufferings.

The house at which we are welcome is the property of some relation of Abou Shein, and is in all respects similar to that which we occupied at K'farchima. Nevertheless it affords us shelter equal to the best castle in the land, and as the proprietor looks upon our visit in the light of a very high honour, nothing is left undone which can in any way contribute to our comfort. But our new host's pleasure is only suffered to be of very brief duration, for we have barely divested ourselves of our boots, and adopted comfortable slippers, intending to loll upon the divan, and enjoy with unspeakable relish a cup of the very veritable mocha berry, before the news of our arrival spreading through the village has reached the ears of Sheik ebn Hamdan, the hereditary chief of the Druses of the Houran; and he sends to claim his privilege, exclusive in this village, of entertaining such distinguished

guests as he chooses to invite. Had we any option, we would prefer remaining with Shein's relative, but apart from personal considerations our refusal would not only offend the sheik, but might inflict some future injury upon our host and Shein; so that we have no alternative but to get up and follow to the sheik's house, bag and baggage. As a matter of course the invitation extends to our guide and his relative.

A few hundred steps bring us to the reception hall of the great man of the village. It differs only from the other houses in being rather more capacious, and boasting of a few more comforts and luxuries in the shape of furniture, but with respect to hospitality all are upon the same benevolent footing. Having gone through all tedious ceremonials, we take up our position for the evening, and are immediately served with refreshments; and the night being misty and chilly, large logs of wood are piled up on the fire in the centre of the room, and a congenial heat soon spreads itself around.

So unbounded are the laws of hospitality in these mountains, that any benighted pedestrian who chooses to seek shelter is welcomed and provided with everything. Such being the case, and although the degrees of civility and attention vary according to the grade of the guest, a very heterogeneous assortment of travellers and wayfarers is assembled in this reception hall when we are introduced; and as the night wears on, this number is gradually augmented by casual pas-

sengers, to all of whom the blazing fire is a source of comfort and attraction.

The formalities gone through upon these occasions are so simple and so nearly bordering upon rudeness, that it would rather astonish the most hospitable soul in Europe, were his guests to introduce themselves after a like abrupt fashion.

A dusty traveller, worn with the fatigues of the day, walks into the yard *sans cérémonie*, and depositing his stick and bundle in a most convenient corner, makes known to the attendants that he has come there to pass the night; the servants intimate this fact to the sheik, and the master of the house replies, "He is welcome;" this is the password for his admission to solace himself, seated by the fire; and forthwith entering and saluting all present, he takes up his position for the evening. If he be poor and in want of food, the menials of the sheik will supply him with what is necessary, and should there be space, allot him a corner, where he may wrap himself in his meshlah and go to sleep till morning; but in most instances house room and warmth are all that these pilgrims seek; they carry their wallets with them, and upon the contents, usually bread and cheese and a few onions, make a frugal but contented repast, invariably with all the refined samples of Oriental etiquette, offering to share the same with all those present.

With them is verified the proverb that civility never costs anything; on the contrary, it often contributes to

make their meal more palatable and companionable, for five or six of these worthies travelling in different directions, and each supplied with his peculiar stock of provisions, partake of their supplies simultaneously, and spreading their frugal all upon the floor, invite each other to help themselves. One may chance to have a few cucumbers, another some chilies, a third cheese, a fourth fine large onions; and so what is lacking to one is supplied from the wallet of the others,—a splendid species of freemasonry which exists only amongst these simple people of a land through ages renowned for its princely hospitality.

After we have rested awhile, the sheik puts his feet into his slippers, and rising up from his seat courteously wishes us good night, and withdraws to the precincts of his private house. We shall see no more of him till breakfast time to-morrow morning, but he has only withdrawn himself the better to superintend our personal comforts; for if we could step behind the scene we should find him hurrying on the preparations for our supper, and perhaps adding a dish or two which had been overlooked by his usually careful wife; then also he issues orders relative to our bedding material, and is careful that we shall be supplied with the best aired and most costly counterpanes, those kept apart expressly for the occasional use of distinguished guests.

Meanwhile the servants have made preparations for serving our repast, and by the time that this has been

duly discussed, all the other natives who are guests have finished their frugal meal and taken up a position round the fire until such time as the lateness of the hour or inclination to sleep shall urge them to seek their respective dormitories. The servants, having supplied us with everything necessary for our wants, leaving a burdhac of water in the room, and heaping up the fire afresh, withdraw themselves for the night; then ensues that quiet harmless gossiping enjoyment which a native considers as the acmé of kef, and when, with all becoming decorum and decency, with low and half-smothered laughs, or whispered exclamations, they recite or listen to tales of personal adventure or the more romantic and inexhaustible themes of wild Eastern fables, which never can tire them though repeated and listened to night after night.

On the present occasion, then, are assembled natives of several of the chief towns and villages of the mountains, and in the patriotic estimation of each nothing can rival or surpass his own particular birthplace. Yet whilst arguing about the comparative worth and beauties, the richness of soil and general wealth of each other's native town, they never transgress the law of civility and etiquette by rude contradictions or denials, though they sometimes rake up bygone events connected with peculiar spots, which act as a damper upon the eulogies bestowed upon them, and extort laughter from even those warmest in praise.

Amongst others there is a servant of the Emir, who

is enthusiastic in his description of the palace at Bêt-il-Deen, whilst an eloquent peasant dilates upon the scenery of Deir-il-Kamar; and as for a descriptive sketch each may be reckoned admirable, we cannot do better than recount some of them as nearly verbatim as the translation will admit, premising always that so beautiful and unlimited is the flow of the Arabic language that the original must lose materially in being translated into any other tongue.

CHAPTER XVI.

BEAUTY OF THE EMIR'S PALACE AT BÊT-IL-DEEN — BOUNTIES OF NATURE—BEAUTIFUL SCENERY—PROLIFIC NATURE OF THE SOIL —EXTERIOR VIEW OF THE PALACE—PICTURESQUE GROUPS OF VISITORS—INTERIOR OF THE PALACE—OPULENCE OF THE EMIR —OUTBREAK BETWEEN THE MAN OF BÊT-IL-DEEN AND THE PEASANT—SPIRIT OF INDEPENDENCE—DEIR-IL-KAMAR—ABUSED HOSPITALITY — ABOU SHEIN — SURNAMES NOT USED BY THE DRUSES.

> The social hours, swift-wing'd unnoticed fleet;
> Each tells the unco's that he sees or hears;
> . . . . . .
> They round the ingle form a circle wide.
>
> BURNS.

"I do not know what place there is in all the *Ard-il-Sultan*," commences the servant of the Emir, "which I can mention as a fit illustration to give my audience some fair notion of the excellent beauty and magnificence of Bêt-il-Deen, the residence of his highness the Emir, my worshipful master! If you talk of Beyrout, I can only say that it is not fit to be admitted in the same catalogue. Il-Sham, with all its renown, in my opinion, is but a wilderness compared to Bêt-il-Deen; and as for the country of you *Frangé*, I have never visited that distant land to enable me to form a

comparison between the two, but everybody tells me that, in the first instance, you gentlemen of *Londra* seldom see the sunshine in your country, never meet with a tree, and that flower gardens and fountains are almost unknown; therefore I am at liberty to say that *Londra* is inferior in beauty and natural scenery to the humblest village of these mountains.

"But to give you some faint idea of that which composes the intrinsic merit and beauty of the Emir's residence, I must tell you that nature is pourtrayed around in countless variety, and exquisite form and shape. First of all we have the mountains, not such as we are accustomed to in this lower altitude, but regular, large, splendid mountains, whose peaks seem to pierce into the very skies, and whose summits are morning and evening covered with gold, and fifty other colours, as the sun rises or sets. Then there is the white peerless snow, spread like a nuptial garment over the barren heights to hide their uncouth nakedness from view, whilst in summer they impart delightful coolness to the atmosphere and supply a never-ceasing source for the endless torrents and streams that rush in perpetual cascades over the loftier precipices, and wending through glen and over mountain side, feed nature luxuriantly, and make spontaneous verdure to clothe the country in an emerald vesture all the year round.

"Then up the sides of these gigantic mountains grow stately trees, taller than I can give you a fair idea of, and with wide-spreading branches thickly

foliaged, where birds of all hues congregate at the mid-day hours and make echoes resound to their merry chaunt as they flutter from bough to bough, or are rocked on the loftier branches. And then when the fierce sun shines hotly upon the mountain sides, or is reflected like a breath of flame from the smooth surface of the rocky precipice, then it is a priceless pleasure which none but those who have experienced can appreciate, to leave the toil and labour of digging in the harder soil, or making aqueducts to guide the streams by proper channels to the gardens below, and seek shelter and repose, if only for a few minutes, under the shade of those umbrageous trees. Seated there at the quiet hour of noon, who can tell the pleasure of listening to the murmuring voice of countless waters, whilst honey-laden bees buzz drowsily from bush to bush, and gaudy butterflies expand their wings under the brilliant light of day. Health and strength are the messengers that ride by to the valleys below, seated between the wings of the mountain breeze, whilst every purling stream carries upon its bosom assurances of wealth and plenty.

"If nature be so bountiful in scattering blessings all around, how can man help being happy and contented? How can I refrain, when I raise the eyebrows of my understanding and peer through the eyes of memory, from exclaiming *Mashalla!* there never was such a country upon the face of the earth as that which surrounds the Emir's palace! Whichever way we look

there is the same profusion of waters, and forests, and cultivation clothing the hills on every side. Around us, in the centre, at an elevation only a little lower than ourselves, rises abruptly a precipitous rocky hill, with ivy clustering round its sides, and stunted fig trees issuing from its fissures, crowned on the top by the palace of the Emir. We seem as though, stepping from the shadow of the tree where we are reclining, we could jump lightly into the very centre of the capacious court yard, which extends in front of the palace, covering the whole level surface of the hill; yet between us is a yawning precipice, and only by a circuitous route of some miles duration, may we reach the entrance to the palace.

"Looking over the top of the palace itself, the whole of our admiration is concentrated on the beautiful picture that is presented us in the distance; only here the mountains form themselves into a funnel many miles in extent, and up the sides of this funnel clamber, in richest luxuriance, grape vines, figs, and other delicious fruit trees, till in the distance the brighter green of their nearer aspect verges into orange and obscurer brown tints, and, finally, the haze of distance gives a violet hue to the intervening plains,—beyond that we look upon the open sea bounded by a distant azure horizon, and with waters of a deep blue tint indicating the fresh breeze sweeping over its cool surface.

"But we descend by the rocky pathway to mount up the hill, and visit the palace itself. Our footsteps are

strewed with richly-scented mountain flowers and violets in abundance, whilst the camphor plant scents the air around. Water is roaring overhead, and gushing down the sides; water is streaming under feet, or falling in foaming cataracts down the sides of impassable rocks. From behind every stone and bush there is a little stream trickling, and plants that love moisture clothe the barren surface of stony rocks with elegant verdure; and the further down we go, the more prolific the earth and the mountain-sides around us. No spot, not an inch of ground, is suffered to remain idle. Cucumbers and water-melons, vegetables of twenty different kinds, spring up and bear fruit where men would least expect it of them, whilst ever and anon we pass under the shade of wreathed arcades, formed by prolific vines clambering over fig trees and pomegranates, and so stretching over their shoots, till they embrace the mountain-side; whilst bunches of ripe grapes are suspended over our heads, and might almost fall into our mouths as we look up to admire and praise them. By and by we get to the lowest level of this altitude, and before us is a lake fed by fifty cataracts, yet deceitfully calm on its surface; whilst the under-currents are whirlpools and rapids which rush madly over the ledges of this surface, and inundate the lower valleys with water. Skirting by the borders of this lake, we look up as we go along, to contemplate the various aspects of the hilly summits around us, many of which are crowned with

picturesque little villages, and overhung with a profusion of grape vines.

"Immediately overhead, like a stately eagle perched upon a lofty lair, stand the bold outlines of the palace; and clambering up these hill sides, we reach the summit and enter upon the court yard, where, to our left hand, is a fountain; before us stands the lofty building itself; to our right extend a number of flat-roofed buildings of every height and conceivable shape, with balcony over balcony, and trellised windows clustering with jessamines and other creeping plants. Prominent, however, and vastly superior to these in size, stands the palace, with tall slender pillars extending from the very base up to the roof of the building, with a splendid marble staircase leading to the apartments occupied exclusively by the prince's harem.

"It is a wonderful sight on any festive occasions or high days and holidays, to stand by the fountain and contemplate the picturesque attitude and costumes of the various groups assembled in the court yard, and who are congregated here to pay their respects to the great man of the mountains, waiting patiently till the turn of each arrives to be ushered into his presence. But few of these have come up thus far on foot. As most of them are men of some estate or calling, the animals they rode are of the best of their kind, and the housings and trappings the most costly they can sport; in addition to this they are all decked out in the richest holiday attire, and the effect produced is

brilliant in the extreme. Here, in addition to casual strangers, you meet with emissaries from all the five sects inhabiting the mountains; for we have Druses, Armenians, Greeks, Maronites, and Metuales, decked out in colours of every imaginable hue, from the sombre robes of the Armenian to the many-coloured over-coat of the spruce Metuale. Cords fastened to strong iron rivets fixed into the solid walls, are stretched across from side to side, and to these are tethered, with all the precision of a cavalry regiment, the horses, mules, etc., of the visitors, whilst camels cluster in groups round the fountain, and patiently chew the cud until their services are again put into requisition.

"Watching the effect of sun and shade upon these groups, and the beautiful result produced by the deep intervening valleys and the more distant violet-coloured hills, we pass along the court yard and enter at the grand entrance door, where guards armed with lances and long muskets give us the pass. There we enter upon suite after suite of magnificent apartments, with flooring of marble let in, like mosaic work, with patterns of flowers and birds, represented by particles of various coloured marble, whilst around the rooms are costly divans covered with the richest carpeting produced by the skill of the Turcoman. Passing through these we come upon a second court with fountains spouting high up into the sunlight, beautiful shrubs and flowers growing round the borders, and gold and silver fish sporting in the basins. At the

further end, supported upon elegant slim pillars, is an open arcade, passing which we enter upon a beautiful saloon painted by the most approved artists from Stamboul. In each corner of the room, spouting out into marble basins, are pure jets of water; and seated on a costly divan, attired in long silk robes, are the numerous *Katibs* employed by the prince, and each of these gentlemen carry, as insignia of their office, a long silver inkstand highly decorated with filigree work. In addition to these the slaves and the officers of the household usually wait here to be within hearing of any summons requiring their presence, and at the further end, partitioned off by a rich damask curtain and considerably elevated, is a carpeted platform, with a divan covered over with crimson velvet. Here the Emir sits to receive his guests, or to give instructions to his officers and servants, and here, during several hours each day, he carries on the affairs connected with the goverment of the mountains.

"If I were to tell you of the value of the magnificent mouthpieces belonging to the pipes used by the Emir, or if I were to recount to you the costly gold and silver-headed narghilès from which the Katibs and officers imbibe smoke all day long, I am afraid that their description would be beyond the reach of your comprehension, or that you would set me down as an idle babbler of fabulous tales. But what shall I say when I come to narrate the costliness of the finjans and coffee-cups so plentiful within the palace at Bêt-il-

Deen? I should be afraid to estimate the value of the precious stones set in these finjans, and I do not know where the clever workmanship displayed in their make can be equalled. All I know is, that these things exist, and that I have seen and felt them day after day, for have I not been ten years in the prince's service, and have I not filled pipes and served coffee every day during that long interval? So I think that I must be allowed to be a judge of these matters; and if anybody here doubts my word, I will lend him my horse and he can go and visit Bêt-il-Deen and judge for himself."

Having brought his description to a close, the Emir's servant looks round with an air of defiance, whilst, fresh filling his pipe, he takes a live coal in his hand and puts it into the bowl. Nobody attempts to contravert what he has told us, whilst Abou Shein whispers confidentially in our ears, that, if anything, the man has underrated the magnificence of the place. The peasant, however, keeps his own counsel, and secretly preferring the town of his nativity, launches forth into a rhapsody concerning Deir-il-Kamar.

"My country," says the peasant, "is situated only on the opposite side of the valley where the Emir's palace stands, and though it is very true that we cannot boast of so much gold and silver, so many yards of damask and velvet, or in fact, anything like opulent luxuriance, still, speaking with all due respect, I would not exchange places, no not with the most fortunate man basking in the favour of the prince."

Here the man from Bêt-il-Deen starts up into an angry posture, and asks what the fellow means by such insolent insinuations,—a parcel of clod-hopping labourers only fit to wash the hoofs of the horses belonging to courtiers at the prince's palace! The peasant, equally angry, immediately retorts that the prince and the courtiers are all great and good men in their way, but that as for the servant he is nothing more or less than an *Abd*, a cringing flattering slave. Here the usual decorum is very nearly being outraged, and it is with difficulty that we can interpose our authority to quell the outbreak. Having, however, heard all that the man from Bêt-il-Deen has got to relate to us, we threaten to expel him from the room if he does not hold his peace; and he, taking huff at the interference, retires speedily into a further corner, pretending straightway to fall into a deep sleep.

Then the peasant continues, after having first reiterated all he has already said, "Deir-il-Kamar, *g'nabkoom*, is situated at the very head of that valley which forms the funnel already so much admired by the man from Bêt-il-Deen, and beyond which are perceptible the plains and the distant sea. The description he gave of the fertility of that spot is not at all overrated; never was earth more productive—never did a little toil produce a speedier or more plentiful harvest; and at all times, even when the intensest calm reigns over other parts of the mountains, we have a pleasant breeze, full of health and vigour, whistling up the funnel. From

this fact alone our town is considered about the healthiest in that neighbourhood, and I am sure that the men, women, and children carry about with them in their persons ample proofs of this. Look at me, for instance," here the peasant sits up in a straight posture; "I never knew what an hour's sickness was from as far back as I can recollect, and if anything adds happiness and pleasure to the fact, it is the spirit of independence which reigns within my breast. I do not owe a man a single para. I have got my own garden and my own house, and when I go out to work I am master of my own time, working with the gratifying certainty that all the fruit of my labour is for the benefit of myself and my family; and when I have done working, and get tired for awhile of my garden and the mountains, then I take the produce and put it upon the back of a donkey, and I start away to Damascus, there to sell or barter away those goods for anything the house may be in want of, just as upon the present occasion, hearing that there are some Franks purchasing silk at Shemlan, I am going thither to-morrow to see if I cannot get a few more piastres than I usually realize.

"I think," continues the peasant, leering slily at the dark heap in the corner, "that is a more pleasant life to lead than to be obliged to fill pipes, from morning to night, for great men and their friends." Hereupon a discontented groan gives evidence that the expelled servant is only shamming sleep, and Abou Shein whispers to the peasant to be more cautious for the future, as his

words are bordering upon treason, but the peasant only the more lustily affirms that he and all his fellow-townsmen are free as the air they breathe.

"In Deir-il-Kamar," he continues, "we number about five hundred Druses, twice as many Maronites, and only thirty Turks; but all these are industrious people, and as everybody knows, our town is considered as the capital of the Druse country in the Lebanon. Our bazaars are the best to be met with within many a mile, and there is no people that can excel us in working the rich abayas, (silk gowns interwoven with gold and silver,) worn only by the great men of the land, some of which are sold at nearly two purses of five hundred piastres each. Our houses are all built of solid stone, and even the poorest among us can afford to entertain a dozen strangers for the evening. All the people of the mountains flock to us to buy many of the requisites, and some of the luxuries, of life; and we grow the best tobacco, the best grapes, the best figs, and the best apricots in the mountain. Even people come from Damascus to purchase the latter, for notwithstanding their famed *Moushmoush lousi* (sweet-kerneled apricots), they find that our fruit is the best to make K'amared-deen, which, in my opinion, took its name from having been first made at Deir-il-Kamar.

"I should like to know," demands the peasant, as though asking a question of his opponent, "what the great sheiks and emirs would do if it were not for our industry and cultivation; where could they find

abayas, where dainties for their table, where vegetables and fruit, and many other necessaries and luxuries, if it were not for the natives of Deir-il-Kamar? But besides all this, the face of nature around is more beautiful than in any other part I have visited or seen, and who can deny that the workmanship of the Creator is infinitely superior to the mightiest efforts of us miserable creatures. And for the matter of that, Deir-il-Kamar can boast of a palace almost equal to that of Bêt-il-Deen. It is not kept in like order, because the prince does not condescend to come thither and dwell among us. Perhaps he is right, for his isolated castle on the rock is a safeguard against the troubles that sometimes break out in these mountains. At any rate I for one rejoice that he keeps away, for we have no restraint put upon us, and our people never learn that cankering, cringing, courtier fashion which degrades the liberty of man and renders his existence miserable."

With this opinion loudly expressed, the peasant informs us that he has had his say, and doubtless in that last sentence was embodied the private opinion of every Druse dwelling upon the mountains. It is not always, however, that they are so bold in their statements, but here, under the roof of one of their own sheiks, the man's words are sacred and not to be repeated. Of this fact the Emir's servant is well aware, for if he breathed but a syllable of what he heard here, the whole mountains would be up in arms to avenge abused hospitality.

By the hour that these two had concluded speaking, time had stolen rapid marches upon the night, and numerous cocks crowing in the neighbourhood warned us that these clarions had already shaken off first sleep and scented the early breath of morning as it crept silently over the face of slumbering nature. Somebody asks Abou Shein why he does not stand up for his native village, and declare, in his turn, that nothing can surpass or rival it; but he says that the best proof of good fruit is the tasting thereof, and that as we have favoured him with our company for some days, it is for us, and not for him, to sound the trumpet of its praise. So we gladden the old man's heart by telling him that if true hospitality and kindness can shed lustre over a spot, then, indeed, his native village may shine like a bright jewel amongst the ordinary pearls and brilliants that surround it. And so, contented beyond measure, with this flattering esteem, each one bethinks him of repose for the night.

But before retiring under our comfortable warm coverlids we have one simple question to propound to our guide and friend. We ask him why everybody calls him Abou Shein, and not simply Shein? "*Ya sidé*," replies the old man, "before I had any sons, everybody in this neighbourhood used to know me as Ahmet ebn Shein, (Ahmet the son of Shein,) a necessary distinction where there are so many of the same name; but when Allah blessed my lot, and gave me my first-born son, then I called the child after his grandfather,

and myself assumed the proud distinction of Abou (father)." From which reply, we are led to conclude that surnames are not used by the Druses: they distinguish lineal descent, by alternately taking the name of father and son; besides in some instances having names which bear reference to their peculiar callings or profession in life.

CHAPTER XVII.

JERUSALEM-MANUFACTURED SOAP—PREPARATIONS FOR THE HUNT—FIRST APPEARANCE OF GAME—EASTERN HAWKING—ABUNDANCE OF GAME—A HERD OF GAZELLES—HUNTING THE GAZELLE—THE FALCONER—ORIENTAL FORETHOUGHT—SHOOTING THE BECCAFIGOES—DEPARTURE OF THE FALCONER—APPROACH TO BEYROUT—PARTING WITH THE DRUSE.

> The falconer drives a merry sport,
> Through the pathless fields on high;
> . . . . . .
> The silver bells on the falcon's feet
> Are making a low glad sound.
>
> T. K. Hervey.

Farewell, *good* friend—I speak the word with vain but fond regret—
It may be long ere we shall meet again as we have met.

Mrs. Embury.

Early in the morning we wake up to a strange hissing sound, not unlike the surging of the ocean against a rocky beach. Being more than half asleep, and imagining ourselves in some boat on the point of shipwreck, we jump up in a great hurry, much to the amusement of Abou Shein, who assures us that the noise proceeds from the grooms in the service of the Sheik, who, at this early hour, are currycombing the cattle and accompanying the process with a strange

guttural hiss. We are, however, rather glad than otherwise, of the interruption to our slumbers, because day has already broken upon the mountain-top, and we have many miles of pilgrimage to perform before night closes our rambles amongst the Druses.

Stepping into the front court-yard, we find the servants of our host already at their avocations, and these immediately bring us basins and ewers of water to assist us at our morning ablutions. Our host cannot boast of honey soap or brown Windsor, but in their lieu he presents us with what is very highly esteemed among all the natives, hard little slabs of Jerusalem-manufactured soap, representing a saint on either side, and which is very rough and gritty to the hand, without possessing any intrinsic merits which can recommend it for purifying purposes. However, we must consider ourselves honoured by being permitted to use it, as the soap itself is usually kept like a relic; so having dispensed with this portion of our toilet, and availed ourselves of the services of another servant carrying a wide loose Turkish towel over his arm, coffee is handed round, and in a few minutes we are ready to make a start. So leaving our compliments and thanks for the master of the house, who has not yet made his appearance from his dormitory, and distributing a few piastres baksheesh amongst the servants, we climb up into our saddles, and ride away in search of a day's amusement.

Shein's relative, who, on further inquiry, turns out to be the identical individual who so much interested

himself in restoring Shein to the favour of his father-in-law, and who carries about with him, stamped upon every feature, the marks of true benevolence, volunteers upon this occasion to accompany us for the day, bringing with him one of those famous hawks for which the East is so celebrated, and which after many years of toil has been perfectly trained for all purposes of the hunt. We ourselves are well provided with fowling pieces, and whatever may assist in contributing to a day's sport; so that upon the whole we start with fair prospects of finding ample occupation and amusement. Unfortunately we are unprovided with dogs, a very requisite accompaniment to sporting in the East, not so much from the difficulty of starting birds, as from the almost impossibility of recovering those wounded without their assistance. Shein's friend, however, consoles us for this want by assuring us that his hawk is so well broken in that not only will no wounded birds escape, but any that may chance to avoid our aim will be captured by the rapid and unerring flight of the hawk.

The early part of the morning we devote to the keen enjoyment of the delightful breezes breathing over the mountains, and there is a freshness in all nature which is indescribable. The grateful earth, teeming with copious dew, emits a pleasant savour, whilst the bushes of briars are clustered with freshly-blown flowers newly developing their beauties of tint and odour; and secure from the destructive hand of the sportsman, myriads of larks and other smaller songsters soar up in the air,

or balancing themselves upon the wavy branches of flowering shrubs sing with all heart and soul a welcome to the bright summer sun.

By and by, as our path becomes more intricate, and shrubs and brushwood entangle all the mountain sides, some startled hares, frightened from their haunts, dart across our path, and with almost lightning speed disappear beyond the limit of our visual horizon; but these give us warning that we have now entered upon those spots where game may be expected. The old man, holding his hoodwinked hawk, liberates its head and eyes from the partial blindness that surrounded it, whilst the eager bird, fluttering with vain anxiety, seeks to disentangle its horny talons from the iron grasp of the falconer. We ourselves dismount, and leaving our horses to the care of the servants, proceed cautiously on foot; the old man, however, still retains his saddle, for from that higher elevation he can better distinguish the flight of birds, and better fling his falcon high up into the air.

We have not gone far before there is a sudden fluttering amongst the bushes, and up starts a whole covey of fine red-legged partridges; two seconds to take aim, one second to pull the trigger, the mouths of our Manton's belch forth destruction; a cloud of smoke, a fluttering in the air, small feathers flying in twenty directions, and the result of our aim is proclaimed; two fat partridges lie dead upon the road, whilst three more of the covey, proceeding with uncer-

tain flight, have dropped down ravines, or amongst impregnable bushes. Now, first having reloaded our empty barrels, so as to be ready for another emergency, we then follow up the tract indicated to us by the old man on horseback, who has not as yet let fly his fluttering hawk.

Now, however, first showing the slain partridges to the hungry falcon, then hiding them in a bag, he takes the bird in his right hand and flings it as high as he can in the air; and there for a moment paralysed, the hawk seems lost to all consciousness, till gradually expanding his wings, and glaring from his piercing eyes, with a wild scream the bird soars higher and higher through the atmosphere overhead, till finally making a pause, he stoops down towards the earth again, and swoops with electric speed right down the valley beneath us; then as we listen to the rapid movement of his wings, the small bells suspended to his feet tinkle again in the air, but the bird has disappeared.

The quiet demeanour of the old man changes suddenly into a frenzy; he shouts, and screams, and hollows after the stray bird, speaking in that strange language familiar only between falconer and falcon; and finding all these efforts unattended with success he takes a small whistle from his waistband, and sounds a long and peculiarly shrill whistle. Now all eyes are bent down over the mountain side, trying to pierce through the thick foliage that secludes the bottom from view; there is a rustling amongst those

leaves, and we can distinctly hear the tinkling of the hawk's bells, then the bird soars up through an aperture in the foliage, and flying to a projecting point half way up the ravine sides, he rests awhile; for the hawk is weary, and suspended to his talons, we can clearly perceive the ruffled feathers of the wounded bird. A second call upon the whistle brings him back to his master's hand, and there he deposits the booty he had searched after and found, with only two infallible eyes.

Now the old man fondly strokes the bird on its back, and whispers to him all kinds of encomiums; then unsheathing a knife that hangs by his girdle, he cuts the throat of the yet warm bird, and suffers the hawk to satiate his hunger from the flowing stream. And now, having rested awhile, the hawk is again launched forth to seek for the remaining wounded fugitives. This time his flight is not so high as before, for instinct has taught the hawk that where prey was already found, other may be lurking in the neighbourhood; so he sweeps over the surface of mountain and vale, and under the leafy boughs of the shady trees; suddenly he darts up higher into the air again, and at that instant two birds, heavy on the wing, flutter up from the bushes, and fly over the sides of the nearest mountain.

But the hawk has paused but awhile in his pursuit; faster than an arrow shot from a bow he follows on their track; one bird flutters for an instant in his horny grasp, and then relinquished, falls heavily dead to

the earth. We scramble up, and pick up the dead bird where it fell, whilst the hawk, having followed up and overtaken the third, brings it with stately triumph back to the falconer; and then the old man, chuckling with delight at our evident surprise and admiration, tells us that this is nothing in comparison to the exploits of his favorite bird.

"By and by," quoth he, "if you have patience, I will show you what the hawk can do;" so, not to weary the bird too much before we arrive at the plains, he hoodwinks it again, and we ourselves, continuing on foot, pick up such game as chance and our good aim brings within the reach of our guns. The variety is great, for, besides partridges and hares, which are very plentiful, we have numbered woodcocks and pigeons, quails, thrushes, and many minor sorts of birds. By and by the sun grows too hot for us to pursue the sport any longer; besides which, the birds themselves have retired for the day from their mountain haunts, and are gone to the plains or elsewhere in search of forage.

Under a stately range of fir trees, not being many miles distant from the village of Ain Ainoub, the road descends suddenly and abruptly down the mountain sides into the deep and pleasant valley, which is intersected by the river Damoor; and arriving on the surface of the level ground of this valley, we trot on to the banks of the river, and there descending, call for a rest. Our horses and ourselves are weary, and both require refreshment and repose.

Whilst reposing here, our old friend with the falcon informs us that at a short distance from this spot is a khan called Nebbi Youni, from a supposition that the prophet Jonas was here landed by the whale; but the old man is very indignant when we identify the place with a fable, and declare to him that similar sights are to be seen at Gaza and Scanderoon. But his good humour is speedily recovered by reverting to the subject of the exploits and cleverness of his falcon. This reminds him that we have not much time to waste in idle talk, as the greater heats will drive the gazelles from the plains to their mountain retreats and lose us the opportunity of enjoying the most sportsmanlike amusement in Syria; accordingly, bestriding our animals again, we ford the river at that point where a bridge once stood.

We have barely proceeded twenty minutes before the keen eye of the falconer has descried a herd of gazelles quietly grazing in the distance. Immediately he reins in his horse, and enjoining silence, instead of riding at them, as we might have felt inclined to do, he skirts along the banks of the river so as to cut off, if possible, the retreat of these fleet animals where the banks are narrowest, though very deep, but which would be cleared at a single leap by the gazelles. Having successfully accomplished this manœuvre, he again removes the hood from the hawk and indicates to us that precaution is no longer necessary; accordingly, first adding a few slugs to the charges in our

barrels, we balance our guns in an easy posture, and giving the horses their reins, set off at full gallop, and with a loud hurrah, right towards the already startled gazelles.

The timid animals, at first paralysed by our appearance, stand and gaze for a second terror-stricken at our approach; but their pause is only momentary, they perceive in an instant that the retreat to their favorite haunts has been secured, and so they dash wildly forward with all the fleetness of despair, coursing over the plain with no fixed refuge in view, and nothing but their fleetness to aid in their delivery. A stern chase is a long chase, and so, doubtless, on the present occasion it would prove with ourselves, for there is many and many a mile of level country before us, and our horses, though swift of foot, stand no chance in this respect with the gazelles. Now, however, the old man has watched for a good opportunity to display the prowess and skill of his falconry; he has followed us only at a hand gallop, but the hawk, long inured to like pastime, stretches forth its neck eagerly in the direction of the flying prey, and being loosened from its pinions, sweeps up into the air like a shot, and passes overhead with incredible velocity. Five minutes more, and the bird has outstripped even the speed of the lightfooted gazelle; we see him through the dust and haze that our own speed throws around us, hovering but an instant over the terrified herd: he has singled out his prey, and, diving with unerring

aim, fixes his iron talons into the head of the terrified animal.

This is the signal for the others to break up their orderly retreat, and to speed over the plain in every direction. Some, despite the danger that hovers on their track, make straight for their old and familiar haunts, and passing within twenty yards of where we ride, afford us an opportunity of displaying our skill as amateur huntsmen on horseback, nor does it require but little nerve and dexterity to fix our aim whilst our horses are tearing over the ground. However, the moment presents itself, the loud report of barrel after barrel startles the unaccustomed inmates of that unfrequented waste, one gazelle leaps twice its own height into the air, and then rolls over shot through the heart; another bounds on yet a dozen paces, but, wounded mortally, staggering, halts, and then falls to the ground.

This is no time for us to pull in and see what is the amount of damage done, for the falcon, heedless of all surrounding incidents, clings firmly to the head of its terrified victim, flapping its strong wings awhile before the poor brute's terrified eyes, half blinding it and rendering its head dizzy, till after tearing round and round with incredible speed, the poor creature stops panting for breath, and overcome with excessive terror drops down fainting upon the earth. Now the the air resounds with the acclamations and hootings of the ruthless victors.

The old man is wild in his transports of delight. More certain of the prowess of his bird than ourselves, he has stopped awhile to gather together the fruits of our booty, and with these suspended to his saddle-bow, he canters up leisurely, shouting lustily the while the praises of his infallible hawk; then getting down and hoodwinking the bird again, he first of all takes the precaution of fastening together the legs of the fallen gazelle, and then he humanely blows up into its nostrils. Gradually, the natural brilliancy returns to the dimmed eyes of the gazelle, then it struggles valiantly, but vainly, to disentangle itself from its fetters. Pitying its efforts, the falconer throws a handkerchief over its head, and securing this prize claims it as his own; declaring that he will bear it home to his house in the mountains, where after a few weeks' kind treatment and care, it will become as domesticated and affectionate as a spaniel.

Meanwhile Abou Shein gathers together the fallen booty, and tying them securely with cords, fastens them behind his own saddle, declaring with a triumphant laugh that we shall return that evening to the city of Beyrout with such game as few sportsmen can boast of having carried thither in one day. But the horses have been so wearied by this hot pursuit that it would be cruel and dangerous not to give them an hour's leisure and pasturage, so their girths are all loosened and the bits being slipped from their mouths, they are left at liberty to graze to their heart's content upon

the ample pasturage around; whilst we ourselves proceeding to a fig tree growing by the banks of the Tamyrus (Damoor) avail ourselves of its scanty shade for an hour's repose. We have no carpets with us, no cushions, no luxuries; but the meshlahs of Shein and his friend, spread out upon the ground, with saddle bags answering as cushions, serve every bit as well for our purpose.

With that forethought peculiar to the Orientals, Shein has come provided with every requisite for coffee and pipes. A few dry twigs fallen from the fig tree help speedily to ignite a fierce little fire, and upon this in less than five minutes is boiling our supply of coffee; so refreshed beyond measure by this fragrant berry and cooled by the atmosphere from the rippling waters of the river, we loll back against the stem of the old fig tree, and prepare to amuse ourselves during our brief stay with the favourite Levantine pastime of shooting beccafigoes, that peculiar little bird which constitutes so dainty a dish for the epicure, and which subsists principally upon figs, being amazingly fat and tasty at the season when this fruit is ripe.

To prepare for this minor havoc it is necessary that we load our guns with proportionately small charges of powder and shot, for, in the first instance, the bird is exceedingly diminutive; in the second place we shoot it from very short distances, never moving from where we are seated, but picking the birds off rapidly as they settle in the branches overhead. Near us are

several other bushes and trees which are evidently teeming with this peculiar species of bird, but we wish to entice them into our own immediate neighbourhood; and upon our intimating this wish to our old friend the falconer, who seems to be an adept at all kinds of sport, he immediately resorts to the whistle used for recalling his hawk, and skilfully blowing into it forthwith produces an admirable imitation of the peculiar little note of the beccafigo.

This species of decoy answers our best expectations; other birds, attracted by the note, immediately flock into the branches overhead, and we allow them there to congregate till ten or a dozen have fixed upon the same branch; then the report of our guns seals the warrant for their execution; they fall almost into our laps, six or eight at a time, and are forthwith transferred to the capacious and already well-filled game bag. Others, frightened away by the noise, fly scared to the opposite side of the bank, but we reload our fowling pieces, and waiting patiently for five or ten minutes resume the decoy system once more. Again the note is speedily answered, the branches are filled with unconscious birds, and we, firing, reap the same results, so that by the time the hour has expired which we allotted to repose and refreshment, we have gathered from fifty to sixty of these delicate and much prized birds, which are here not so coy as in the more immediate and much-frequented environs of Beyrout.

At last the hour of our departure has arrived; the

old man and the Druse busy themselves in collecting together our animals and re-adjusting their saddles and bridles; then, as we re-mount again, the old falconer comes, and raising our hands to his lips, bids us a long and hearty farewell: his duties call him to his home again, and so thanking him heartily for the sport he has afforded us, we suffer him to depart, watching his diminishing figure, till having waded through the stream, he waves his hand to us in token of farewell, and disappears behind a rising ground.

And now we, too, pursue our way from this wilderness to the haunts of man, our faithful guide, the Druse, still keeping us company, though we have no need of his further services, and have given him permission to return to his village; but he, in his strict sense of honour and integrity, would think his compact broken were he to leave us one second before we reach our starting point again. He says he undertook to accompany us in a tour through the Druse villages, and to bring us safely back to Beyrout again; so there is no gainsaying his argument, and we three,—that is you, Reader, myself, and Abou Shein,—follow up our homeward path, glad to think of home and rest after so many days' rambling, and full of all we have seen or heard during our short but agreeable campaign.

For the first hour or two after leaving the Damoor the road is capital, and admits of reverie or soliloquy; but after this comes what not even in our mountain rambles has been surpassed or even equalled. To call

it a road any longer would be to heap insult upon the very word itself, neither can it lay claim to be classed as a beacon pathway. We encounter bits of rock and stone, loose gravel and earth, narrow ledges and tortuous windings with no certain footing for the horses, or indications of how we got into some places, or how we are to get out of them again; but the natural instinct of the horses guides them over and through apparently insurmountable difficulties.

Now we are riding by the sea shore, delighted with the softness of the sandy beach, and cooled by the spray of the murmuring waves; then we are striking across a promontory whose whole surface is one mass of fragments of loose stones and rocks, with brushwood and briars innumerable; at last, when we are plodding through a weary wilderness of sand, the last rays of the setting sun are reflected brilliantly upon the taller minarets and housetops of the still distant Beyrout. This sight, however, cheers us in our solitude; the horses stride on with revived animation; the shades of night are just hovering over the horizon as we come in sight of the frequented haunts in the environs of the city, and enter the "Hourg," a grove of pines of immense and stately growth, with noisy rookeries established in their higher branches.

Here we encounter many familiar faces of persons riding to and fro for amusement in this frequented part; answering the many recognitions with equally friendly inquiries, we ride on apace, for the hour grows late,

and, of a truth, we are weary and exhausted. One by one, in the surrounding gloom, we recognise familiar haunts; the city gates are past, the thronging multitudes in the street stand aside to gaze as the travellers pass; before us is the gateway of the khan, where our Druse lodges, and here only he stops, for he thinks that now his promise has been well fulfilled. So we bid our trusty friend adieu, not without bestowing upon him a better proof of friendship and thankfulness than mere words or etiquette can lavish, and as we get to the old house where hospitality hangs up her lamps, dismounting from our weary nags, we walk upstairs, and so clamber again up to the lofty terrace.

The hour is again night; the stars are twinkling brightly in the firmament; the calm sea gently laves the sides of our home; and the last cry of the muedden call to prayer echoes over the sombre and silent city. It is time to say farewell. The Druse, in all integrity, has fulfilled his promise; by his guidance we have visited the mountain haunts of the Druses, partaken of their hospitality, joined in their festivity, witnessed their daily habits, and listened to their tales descriptive of the cities of their birth, rude though these cities be in the estimation of others. Then, again, we have found that even romance is to be met with on the Lebanon; and in the plains of that ancient city, Sidon, we have joined in the most familiar sports of the East.

It remains for us to investigate, as far as we are permitted, the origin and religion of that strange people

who through ages have been permitted to dwell with unrestrained liberty amongst all other creeds and sects, just as the Hivites dwelt amongst the Israelites on Lebanon, pursuing their own secret creed, adhering to their primitive costumes and customs, and remaining, even to the present day, "*a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on an hill.*"

CHAPTER XVIII.

ANTIQUITY OF THE DRUSES—THE DRUSE PEOPLE—BATTLE NEAR SIDON—FAMILY FEUDS—HAFEEZ MARCHES UPON BANIAS AND SHAKEFF—DEFEAT OF THE TURKS—MAHOMET PASHA A CUNNING POLITICIAN—VALOUR OF THE DRUSES—THE INVADERS DISPERSED THE SULTAN MUSTAPHA—DISCOMFITURE OF THE TURKS—THE GRAND DUKE OF TUSCANY AND THE DRUSE EMIR.

> I come no more to make you laugh; things now,
> That bear a weighty and a serious brow,
> Sad, high, and working, full of state and woe,
> Such noble scenes as draw the eye to flow,
> We now present.
>
> SHAKESPEARE.

It is a well-ascertained fact that the Druses inhabited Mount Lebanon before the time of the invasion of Syria by the Crusades; and that they were prominent as a powerful people even pending the brief interval between the Saracen Frank and Egyptian sway; and were never entirely subdued by any power, till about the year 1517, at which period the last member of a valiant Druse family, who had reigned in these parts with uninterrupted sway through a period of nearly seven hundred years, was reduced to comparative insignificance. This fact alone at once refutes the

false notion entertained by some of the Druse Akals themselves, that they can trace their origin to some of the European princes who had accompanied the Crusades.

So far back as the period above alluded to, the Druses were in possession of some incidents connected with their ancient sway upon these mountains; and perhaps their earliest record of ill success dates from an act of the basest treachery perpetrated by a Turkish officer, who had been sent upon a particular service into these mountains to investigate some act of dishonesty which had been committed within the limits of the Druse territory, when several of their chiefs, surprised and inveigled by the treacherous Mahometan, were surrounded and exterminated upon the spot. With such records before us, we may be enabled to obtain some clue which may assist us in tracing a feeble and imperfect outline of their history, dependent solely for information upon those sources which originate from them, and are founded upon the hear-say and tradition of their Akals, handed down from father to son through successive generations.

We have endeavoured, through the earlier chapters of this work, in an easy and familiar style, to make the reader acquainted with all the natural splendour of scenery which characterises the country inhabited by these people; at the same time that we sought to develope all their peculiarities in costume and customs, by mixing freely in their society and entering into

their familiar haunts on terms of the greatest intimacy. It may, therefore be excusable if from the nature of the subject, (for what history does not possess a sameness and dulness, excepting at casual intervals?) this portion of the work be found heavier and less entertaining, though, it is trusted, not one whit the less instructive than the portion that has preceded it.

Amongst a people naturally addicted to fable and much attached to the marvellous, it may be necessarily expected that the most trifling incidents of their early history have lost considerably in their intrinsic and simple merit; whilst, expanding by oral tradition, the slightest events, or the most trifling victories, worked upon by the fevered imagination of a people exceedingly patriotic, have been metamorphosed into eras and records of chivalry or valour. Beyond a doubt, these people, ever since these mountains have been their chosen haunts,—ever since breathing this mountain air and being inspired with the healthful love of freedom, have been possessed of that remarkable and undaunted courage which is such a singular feature in their character even at the present day. There is, consequently, every supposition that during their lengthened existence as a people, they have had ample opportunity to display their courage and to combat for their birthright of freedom. Thrown into contact with the successive governors of the land, they have rarely been permitted to remain long in the uninterrupted possession of their fertile lands without strenuous efforts

having been made to despoil them; though they have never, even to the present moment, been completely subdued.

Not long after the act of treachery already recorded, a wary sheik, acting upon the spur of the moment, and adding fuel to the fierce flame for vengeance and satisfaction that burnt in the breasts of these warlike people, inspired them with hopes of victory and independence; and, working upon those clannish feelings, which are so prominent a trait in the Druse character, urged them on to rebellion. The whole mountain was speedily convulsed by the most terrific bloodshed and rapine till about the commencement of the seventeenth century, when a successful battle, fought near Sidon, terminated for the time being favorably for the Druses, and established their reputation and dominion for awhile; whilst the mountains of the Kesrouan and the provinces of Beyrout and Tiberius submitted to the jurisdiction of the sheik, who established his headquarters at Safat.

These acts of aggression were regarded not without jealousy by the Ottoman Sultan, but so long as he confined his warlike propensities to the immediate district of the Lebanon, it was deemed wisest not to interfere with the lion in its own den. Their inaccessible strongholds, their dauntless courage, their well-known hardihood and temerity, rendered the Druses a terrible opponent in any field of battle; but they became invincible when bearded in their own retreats, when

each man fought with the instinct that freedom, life, happiness, and home, depended upon his valour and intrepidity. But urged on by a spirit of ambition, the Emir was unwise enough to enter into open rebellion, by throwing off the allegiance to the Sultan, and by declaring in favour of a rebel pasha, then in supreme power at Aleppo, in conjunction with whom he attacked and ransacked Damascus, levying on the citizens a very heavy ransom for their liberty. This act brought upon him the immediate indignation of the Ottoman government, and fifty chosen regiments, each a thousand men strong, were despatched under experienced Ottoman commanders, to endeavour to settle matters upon the Lebanon.

The chances are that had the Emir been frankly dealt with, or could he have counted upon the support and friendship of all the minor chiefs, then this powerful invading army, with all its boasted strength and talent, could have accomplished but little. As matters turned out, however, petty feelings of spite and family feuds were permitted to counterbalance the more important demands of mutual assistance and reciprocal strength, though some few of the chiefs attended to the summons of the Emir, and met him with all disposable forces at the appointed rendezvous on the banks of the Damoor. It was found that their combined efforts would have been too feeble to resist the overwhelming attacks of the Turks, especially when menaced by intrigue and treachery at home;

and it was consequently resolved to offer little or no opposition to the progress of the Turkish troops; whilst the Emir himself, disgusted and disheartened by his position, determined upon securing his personal safety by relinquishing his country and retiring to Europe.

The brother of the Emir, however, more stable of purpose, determined to resist to the uttermost, either by force of arms or diplomacy, the encroachments of the invaders. Hafeez, a renowned Turkish general, marched upon Banias and Shakeff, both of which fortresses he compelled to surrender; and the mother of the Druse prince, accompanied by several Akals, proceeded to the tent of Hafeez, offering as a ransom for these strongholds a considerable sum of money. This offer was accepted, and as the winter was approaching, the Turkish general deemed it prudent to retire with his forces from the mountains, because those regions were inhospitable and inaccessible at all seasons to the invader, and because encamping in the plains afforded better shelter and more prolific pasturage for the cattle, as also comforts for the men of the expedition.

So soon, however, as a congenial season admitted of warlike operations, the Turks were again upon the march; and in 1615, Ob Elias and the plains of the Barouk were dotted with the tents of the invading army. Meanwhile the Druses had by no means remained idle or indifferent to their precarious position. One of the chiefs had succeeded in collecting a considerable

force from the Shoof, and by a display of well-timed eloquence he had so worked upon the dispositions and temperament of these people, that he convinced them that death and annihilation were preferable to submitting to the accursed rule of the Moslem.

Strong words were these for a chief to use towards his people, while both parties, under the mask of hypocrisy, too often imitated the doctrines and creed of those whose authority they now foreswore. Yet the urgency of their position admitted of no alternative; there was no medial course to pursue, and Druse swore to Druse that come what might they would rather perish to a man than submit to the infamous oppression of the Turks. Wound up to desperation by the peculiar and irremediable alternatives placed before them, these forces attacked the enemy with desperate valour, and the Maronites combining with the Druses succeeded in compelling the Turks to retire upon the plains of the Bekaa.

After this temporary success, the Druse chieftain bethought him of re-constructing the fortifications about Banias; and some dissatisfaction reigning amongst the mountain tribes, the Turkish commander was enabled by this false position of affairs to advance unobstructed upon Deir-il-Kamar, which country he ravaged and burnt to the ground. But the Druses, enraged beyond measure at the treachery of those Yemini tribes, who had so basely acted as pilots in directing the course of the invading army over a

country heretofore but little accessible, saving only to those peculiar people who inhabited its heights, assembled in great forces at a secluded valley in the vicinity of Sidon, known to this day as Merg Bizra. Here twenty thousand men, recruited by the Pasha of Tripoli, marched upon the Druses, and here this immense force was completely routed and put to flight with great slaughter, though attacked by only twelve hundred invincible Druses,—a signal victory, which gained for this mountain people unfading laurels, at the same time that it entailed lasting disgrace and dishonour on the unfortunate Turkish commander, who was immediately replaced by Mahomet Pasha, a cunning politician, who, working upon the only sure means of success, enfeebled these mountain people by instigating tribe against tribe, and by venemously distributing seeds of discord and jealousy, which successfully co-operated in extirpating the strength which had only existed so long as mutual assistance and clanship remained a law upon the mountains.

Arab tribes sharing with the Christians and the Druses these fertile mountain countries, succeeded with their usual duplicity in materially injuring the safety, peace, and interests of the mountain people; and the Yemini and Keis, two eminent tribes of Arabia, who held powerful sway in the days of the impostor Mahomet, migrating to these parts from the force of circumstances, found it more suitable to their proverbial love of indolence and freedom to establish themselves

in these most fertile parts, where but little labour or expense brought tenfold remuneration to the cultivator, and which have ever been noted as the most prolific district in Palestine. Here, carrying with them that peculiar craftiness which so distinguishes their race, and which has been the trait of these people ever since the days when the descendants of Ishmael first inhabited these plains, having encroached upon the hospitality of these the original lords of the land, they abused all the kindred ties of clanship or hospitality by entering at once into the intrigue, the pay, and service of the invading chief, and by acting as spies and despicable villains, to those very people who had defended them in the hour of need.

In 1617, towards the close of the reign of the Sultan Ahmed, one terrible day witnessed upon the mountains four distinct sanguinary engagements, one at the Damoor, the other at Abei, the third at Ain Dara, and the fourth at Adgmeet. To describe the desolation, the fierceness, the wrath of these deadly strifes, would be to depict the face of humanity in its most hideous aspect; it would be to convert earth into hell, and men, made after God's own image, into fiends incarnate. It is fearful enough, upon any occasion of warfare, to witness the mastery of the evil spirit over all the more eloquent and the more beautiful traits of human nature; but then, the greater masses engaged upon this conflict, are simply excited as hirelings to slay and to slaughter every

opponent; they do not regard each unhappy victim of the unerring bullet, or the well-sharpened sabre, in the light of a private or individual foe; they hack and hue away; they aim with better precision, simply because they are aware that a failure in the strength of their arm, or the aim of their eyes, entails peril and discomfort to themselves.

It was otherwise with the few and hunted-down Druses that were arranged in these different battles; every man knew personally and individually that death or victory was his choice. Born to breathe the air of unshackled liberty, they had been equally bred to disdain and abhor the proverbially intolerant yoke of the Mahometan rule; their best strongholds, their chiefest fortifications, had been wrenched from their sway by the treachery of those who had been heretofore never their friends, but considered in the light of refugees and exiles; and so, with this sentiment bracing up the nerves of each warrior, the whole band or bands fought as though actuated by one single impulse, and the result was beyond even the expectation of the most sanguine. The Turks laboured under the disadvantage of want of sufficient knowledge of the localities that were occupied by the contending forces; the Druses had every advantage in this respect, though they lacked numerical force. Like fierce bloodhounds set upon the scent, they dispersed the invaders, and the chief sheik of the liberal party, having vanquished the foe, ruled with despotic sway.

It will be remembered by those conversant with Mahometan history, that, at this peculiar epoch, the armies of the Ottoman Sultan had degenerated into the most deplorable effeminacy and decrepitude. Mustapha, the youthful Sultan, had attained to the dignity of the Muznud; but inefficient in talent, wanting in intellect, lacking that singular firmness of purpose which was so requisite for any man to enable him to govern an empire at all periods turbulent and rebellious, at this time verging upon rebellion, he had barely assumed the reins of government when the insolence and uncurbed hostility of the Janissary chiefs caused the hapless youth to be deposed, deprived of his short-lived dignity, and to exchange the luxuriance and pleasure of supreme command for the horrors and discipline of a Turkish prison of state.

It was no wonder, therefore, at a period when a people could so speedily make or unmake a sovereign, that the moral discipline of the armies of such a country should be lax in the extreme. The soldiers of the Ottoman empire had no spirit of patriotism to stir them up to the necessary activity and indispensable valour of any people attempting to invade a country well fortified by nature, well guarded by the bravest men that ever Providence set upon the mountains to be as a beacon to the infidelity of others. The result, as has been already stated, was advantageous in the extreme to the Druses: the whole territory of the Lebanon, extending from Tripoli to Sidon, was divided

amongst the head chiefs of these tribes, and a momentary peace, with a feeling of permanent security, reigned upon the heights of the Lebanon.

Some efforts were made, but very feeble ones, both as regards plan and execution, to recover the advantages lost by the Turkish forces. One man, a discontented chief of the Arab tribes already alluded to, proceeded to Damascus and got appointed governor of two of the principal cities within the range of the jurisdiction of the now independent chief of the Druses. This man had sufficient temerity with a small body-guard to sally forth from Damascus, with the object of assuming the reins of his new government. But the Druses had spies on the alert to acquaint them with every fresh movement of the enemy, and the result was that the head of this incautious man was carried to the Druse chieftain as a trophy of the ill-success of that feeble mission.

Whilst these events were transpiring on the Lebanon, the Emir, who had deserted his post and resorted to the shores of Europe to seek patronage and protection from a people then acknowledged to be powerful, was working out schemes of ambition. To better accomplish these, he had sought refuge and protection amongst a people then supposed to be the greatest of the then developing empires of Europe. The Grand Duke of Tuscany was the fortunate man who afforded a domicile and the protection required by this Druse chieftain. It would seem from the description

given by some authors that he was overwhelmed by courtesy on the part of several of the noblest families in Italy; but, possessed of natural shrewdness, this man at once discovered that he was more the object of selfish ambition than one who should have demanded unqualified hospitality from the highest to the lowest.

From the Grand Duke to the peasant, every man made it his business to endeavour to unravel the mystery of the flight of so great a man from a land intuitively connected with the supposed knowledge of all Christians who had read of the Lebanon. He was fêted, he was honoured, he was caressed; and his invitations to partake of the hospitality of numerous distinguished families were so many, that the man, apparently at that period ignorant of the doctrines professed by the present Akals, found himself estranged from the necessary ceremonials and practises of the Mohametan faith; and having his daily orisons interrupted, he refused many of the most privileged civilites, and to the astonishment of the highest men of that day, spurned their hospitality with indignity.

The fact was, that he had acquired, barbarian as he was supposed to be, sufficient intuitiveness to discern at a single glance that these professed liberalities amounted to neither more nor less than an unrestrained wish on the part of those aspiring Europeans to glean from this man of Lebanon sufficient insight into the internal government and geographical position of his native country, to enable them with the greater facility

to possess themselves of a territory long coveted by Christians, sacred in the archives of Holy Writ, and one which under circumstances appears to be impregnable.

CHAPTER XIX.

RETURN OF THE EMIR TO LEBANON — JENGHIS KHAN — A FLAG OF TRUCE — FAKEREDDEEN — INDIVIDUAL ATTAINMENTS — THE GREATNESS OF FAKEREDDEEN — THE BEDOUINS OF THE DESERT — THE LAND OF IDUMEA — TURKISH PASHAS IN 1626 — DRUSE INSUBORDINATION — CHIVALRY OF THE DRUSES — CHARACTER OF FAKEREDDEEN — DRUSE INDEPENDENCE.

> There govern'd in that year
> A stern, stout, churl,—an angry overseer.
> CRABBE.

TIRED of the flattering reception offered him by the Tuscan people, the fugitive Emir once again bethought himself of home; and so he returned to his mountain residence, welcomed back by the enthusiasm of all classes then claiming a kind of clanship with the Druses. At first things seemed to proceed as favourably as any chieftain might wish, and time rolled on unmarked by any peculiar feature; until in 1622, a remarkably severe winter rendered the fastnesses of the Lebanon all but impracticable. At this very moment there was a host of enemies beleaguering the mountain tribes on every accessible point, and the newly-returned chieftain,

animated by a peculiar courage, which at the best was timorous, ventured forth at a time when the elements seemed combined to annihilate nature.

It was no easy task for men, hardened even as these Druses were hardened, to countenance such a fearful opposition as the elements presented. Snow, in unharrowed flakes, seemed an insuperable barrier even to the hardiest and most experienced of those mountaineers; so much so that they had to resort to the not unusual subterfuge of spreading carpets, rugs, mats, and other material to facilitate the passage of the troops even from one mountain side to the other.

Never, perhaps, in the records of the history of nations did such a frightful aspect present itself to deter the progress or success of warlike operations. The only similar record in the pages of Eastern warfare which at all resembles, and perhaps surpasses this undaunted undertaking, was the passage of the troops under Jenghis Khan, when that invincible warrior surmounting nature's severest barriers, led thousands of his troops to destruction, at the same time that the survivors reaped a well-earned harvest of rapine on the fertile plains inhabited by the Belochees and the little-known races of Affghanistan. It is a recorded fact of history that on this particular enterprise, traversing heretofore inaccessible and unknown heights, this invincible warrior, brave as a general, yet detestable as a man, led troops over scenes of desolation unparalleled in the world. Undaunted by obstacles which might

have shaken the faith and courage of a Cæsar himself, this great and wild warrior, entangled amongst fastnesses fearfully impregnable at the mildest season, and terrible beyond conception during the winter months, conducted hordes of men, as a queen bee might the inmates of a hornet's nest, high up into altitudes seldom penetrated by human beings, and down into latitudes the most luxuriant and the most fertile conceivable.

It is fearful, even though through the simple medium of a book, to record the devastating effects of that terrible expedition. The cost of life was the most trivial estimation in the catalogue of that ruthless hero's achievements, as it would appear that at the same moment that he assumed to himself peculiar instruments for the safety of his own person, being slid over the most fearful precipices by means of strong cords which secured him to temporary slides, he looked on a reckless spectator of the thousands that were every moment being launched into eternity by the impassable nature of those dreadful hills over which they were guided towards a then dubious victory.

Even so amongst those equally perilous recesses of the Lebanon, this desperate chief, pickaxe in hand, led on a few hardy followers towards an equally dubious conquest; because it is not to be imagined that the usually temperate nature of climate which prevails over the lower lands of Syria, is any index to the obstacles annually to be encountered upon the loftier highlands

of the Lebanon: many parts even at the present moment and during the mildest of winters, are considered by the Druses themselves as perilous in the extreme, and only to be undertaken when urgent necessity compels them to traverse these desolate and icebound regions.

In the year above mentioned, however, no impediment of nature could have offered sufficient obstacle to the enthusiastic determination of the demi-civilised chieftain of these vigorous Druse mountaineers. He acted the part of a careful general in pioneering their routes by manual labour; his intellect was in no case permitted to lie dormant; he worked harder than the men that followed him; he encouraged them by action as well as by word to offer the most inexorable resistance to the foes of their liberty and in fact of their existence as a people.

The desperate resistance of the well-conducted opposition offered by the Druses, compelled the invading parties to enter into terms which would have been foreign to the notions and position of the Turkish general. At last, a homage to their obstinate bravery, a flag of truce indicated that the Turks had been wearied out, and matters were momentarily temporized by the intermarriage of one of the principal Ottoman commanders with the daughter of a sheik of some considerable influence amongst the Druses. This fortuitous event might have established a permanent peace upon the mountains, but the time for such a happy circumstance had not as yet

arrived: a singular and trifling incident gave rise to a fresh outbreak amongst the mountaineers themselves, and the invaders profiting by this dissension, bid fair to annihilate the pretensions of all creeds to independence.

It is mentioned by the more learned Akals of the Lebanon, that the great chief of that period was a person insignificant in stature and exceedingly uncomely in personal appearance, yet withal possessed of the keenest and most sensitive disposition. Fakereddeen, for so was this chieftain called, unfortunately chanced to overhear a conversation held between one of his immediate relatives, a powerful chief himself, and his own daughter, in which, casually alluding to his personal strength, the latter remarked that his own little finger had more nerve and possessed much more power than the chieftain himself. Enraged beyond measure, and implacable, this man, despite the entreaties of friends and family, rushed from the house, and entering amongst his clan, brandished the torch of civil discord; so that two powerful people, who ought to have acted in concert against the invasions of a mutual enemy, became respectively and inadvertently tools in the hands of the Turks, to annihilate each other's position and to facilitate the grand object of the Turkish general, which was by internal dissension to exterminate the strength of resistance of a people unconquerable if united, but who, from their paucity of numbers, were easily

vanquished when separately attacked or bribed over by baneful influences to undermine their only source and hope of existence.

Discomforted by the allusions made with reference to his stature, the renowned Fakereddeen is reputed to have composed a stanza remarkable for its pithy evidence of bearing testimony to the fact, that however insignificant the appearance of humanity, we are not thereby supposed to form any adequate judgment of the attainments or personalities of individuals.

If we may be permitted to pause, without any inconvenience to the readers of this simple history, the remark is applicable even to the present generation of mankind. How often does it happen, that the smallest and apparently most insignificant specimens of humanity are possessed of a vital power far beyond our comprehension, and sometimes of an eloquence amounting to enthusiasm? It may not be—or in fact it must not—be considered as in any light derogatory to particular personages, if we specify a few proofs of this peculiar theme, universally acknowledged even by the little-tutored people of that age. Dr. Johnson was a bear in manners, yet a marvel in intellect. Napoleon himself, beyond refutation the greatest general that ever trod upon the earth, was unfavoured by nature, as far as regards personal appearance. And, to be more apt, our own hero, the Emperor's greatest enemy and only victor—we allude to the late Duke of Wellington — was a person

of no prepossessing—that is to say, of no distinguished mien. And if we come down to persons flourishing—or, alas! be it written, who have too briefly flourished—that gifted man, Eliot Warburton, who could write and describe lands familiar to these very people whose various positions we are now endeavouring to discuss, was a modern and more elegant, a more refined specimen of the Dr. Johnson style, yet of such fragile texture, so small limbed, and so disproportioned in stature, that were men to reckon intellect by size or appearance, the renowned author of "The Crescent and the Cross" would have dwindled into insignificance.

It is, however, a remarkable incident, perhaps very foreign to the nature of this book, yet still bearing a collateral signification in reference to the undaunted Druse commander, Fakereddeen, that the most remarkable warriors, statesmen, authors, and diplomatists, have been almost invariably men of insignificant stature; there is no occasion to travel further than through the pages of the history of our own country, or to the records of renowned heroes who have been brought in contact with our own victorious admirals and generals. Wellington and Napoleon, the renowned Tippoo Saib, and the equally famous Washington, of America, are well known to have been disproportionate to what is usually characterised as a fine-made man. Andrea Riadoria, Nelson, and the unfortunate Bandiera, were nautical specimens of

caskets of great value contained within a diminutive space; Pitt was a small man, and Pope notoriously insignificant; yet all these individually have aided to shed a lustre upon the pages of the records of human prowess, if anything can be said to be fine or magnificent in connection with the fallen race of man.

Yet, I presume, that like the various stewards, quoted by our Redeemer, every man, according to his gift, is expected to expand and to confer some benefit upon his neighbour; and so in a small, yet for that part significant manner, did Fakereddeen shed a temporary lustre upon the historical records of the Druse chieftians, and to this day, a lasting monument to some of his acts for the amelioration of his people and the adornment of his country, may be seen massive portions of a marble gateway which once constituted a triumphal arch for this outwardly insignifiant man to pass under in his daily visits to the palace at Deir-il-Kamar. But he was really a Cæsar and a Napoleon in his way; at no period did the Druses bask under better influence than during the sway of this renowned chief; for he appears to have overrun the greater part of Palestine, and even to have obtained a nominal sway of the districts about Jerusalem.

In 1626, this man was invested with the right of government, by the Sultan Amureth, over that imaginary district defined as the Mountains, extending from Jerusalem to Tripoli. Now we are all aware that no such consecutive range exists; but whether, under

this nomenclature it was presumed that he governed both plain and hilly country, it is difficult to define; although it is evident that the wording of the Emir's appointment conferred upon him the fabulous chieftainship of those wild and insubordinate tribes to be met with between the borders of the desert near Damascus, and extending round the shores of that desolate and accursed lake, Asphalaton, the presumed site of the destroyed cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Now, it is a well-known circumstance, that even from the earliest rule of the Saracen cailiff, Omar, through the vicissitudes that have waited upon Jerusalem, no people and no government have been able effectually to subjugate these independent, wild, and homeless Bedouins; a people ever the terror of the more civilised classes inhabiting those parts upon the confines of the deserts; the stumbling-block to the enterprise of all European travellers; and who, even up to the latest date, have proved a terrible scourge and detriment to the investigation of scientific expeditions sent out by the governments of England and the United States. Yet, over all these people Fakereddeen was supposed to hold viceregal sway, and the very nomination, like the old fable of the dog in the manger, brought about him the jealousies and persecutions of the Ottoman pashas, then holding supreme command at those two ancient and much famed cities, Jerusalem and Damascus. They could do nothing themselves, and, moreover, they were compelled to submit without hope or chance of

retaliation to the predatory incursions of these wild and hostile people.

It happened then—it happens now, and ever will be the case until the term of prophecy be completed—that these ruffianly inhabitants of the accursed land of Idumea will be a bane and a bugbear to all those flourishing cities which define the borders of this dreary waste; for, in the words of the most eloquent prophet, we have recorded a fearful and a terrible curse upon these parts, commencing, "Thou art cast out, out of thy grave as an abominable branch, and as the remnant of those that are slain, for I will rise up against them, saith the Lord of Hosts; I will also make it a possession for the bittern and pools of water; and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction." "The cormorant and the bittern shall possess it, the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it; thorns shall come up in their palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof; and it shall be an habitation and a court for owls; the screechowl shall rest there, and the great owl make her nest, and lay and hatch under her shadow; there also shall the vultures be gathered."

Such was the desolate and the terrible country over which the Druse chieftain was supposed to exercise influence and command—such was the country of which the Ottoman governors envied him the supremacy; and yet neither the one nor the other could ever have hoped, under whatever auspices, to have *de facto* exer-

cised authority in these localities. It was more than human authority, backed by human hordes, could hope to do; for it was a country sealed by the terrible curse of prophecy against the incursions or the supremacy of any power reigning upon earth, and so it remains to this present day. Nevertheless this apparently insignificant chief enjoyed all the dignity attached to his position, and the exercise of this authority brought him into immediate and unfriendly contact with the Pasha of Damascus.

In those days pashas were invested with far greater powers than they possess at the present moment, though at the same time they were exposed to the most unequivocal dangers; and not only their authority but their very lives depended upon the favour or disapprobation of the Sultan. At the same time, in respect to supreme sway, they were infinitely superior to what the minor dignitaries of the present day can pretend. They were absolutely despots in those provinces over which their powerful jurisdiction extended; and at the same time that it was a familiar incident in the calends of Turkish history to hear of these men being suddenly strangled, or as unceremoniously disposed of, so long as they had life and authority they exercised undivided power with them. The life and property of individual subjects were as a matter of profit and loss: wherever there was money or territory to be gained, the subject, without using ample bribery, was never secure of either. There

were no influential diplomatists, representatives of the courts of powerful nations, to act as a check-string to the vagaries of these too often flagrant villains; and it was consequently not unnatural that the men invested with supreme authority at Damascus and Jerusalem should have demurred at the nomination of the chief of a people looked upon by themselves as subordinate and insignificant.

Notwithstanding the strongly-worded firman which invested Fakereddeen with the supreme command over these wild and incorrigible people, never considering the absurdity of such a position, yet fully aware himself, with all power to back him, that he was totally unable to earn one para of revenue from tribes that always set at defiance the taxation of the Ottoman government, still the Pasha of Damascus was loth to see an infringement upon what he considered his titulary rights of government; and though the very act itself breathed rebellion to his master, he ventured to issue a proclamation derogatory to the assumed privileges of the Druse chieftain, and threatened to annihilate every effort made by him to carry out his designs or inclinations as nominal governor of a people who never would submit and never have submitted to any government.

Hearing that it was the Druse's intention to promulgate certain edicts amongst these people, the pasha, jealous of his authority and too chary of his rights, summoned his people to congregate under the standard

of the Ottoman Sultan and against the sovereign declaration of this very potentate, to fight against the authority of one who only assumed such authority under the direct patronage of the person whom they themselves pretended to acknowledge as their supreme master and governor.

This act of insubordination, startling as it may appear, was but a too frequent feature in those convulsed periods throughout the Ottoman dominions. It would be foreign to the purport of this work to cite instances, but every pasha attempted at that period to assume himself a distinct and independent sovereignty. However, in the present instance, had it not been for the chivalrous and excellent disposition of the Druse people, their willingness to countenance the supremacy, but not to submit to the imposition of the Turkish government,—owing to this spirit alone the Damascene pasha was saved the disgrace and discomfort of being utterly routed by the forces under Fakereddeen.

The Druses had upon this occasion, as indeed upon almost every other opportunity, displayed an invincible valour, and now too virtuously excellent, they deemed it a shame to prove themselves vanquishers of a people virtually their lords; so that when in reality they might have been supposed from their position in the battle to lead their opponents, diminished and subdued, as captives into captivity, they volunteered to fall into their cohorts, and in this invidious position pretend

to enter the city rather as submissive captives in the suite of their vanquished opponents. Here was witnessed one of those remarkable transactions so significant of the general hypocrisy that prevails over all formalities of government.

Under the Ottoman sway, the real conquerors pretending to admit of the dubious infallibility of the foe, once seeing themselves masters of their positions and fortifications, immediately assumed that fictitious position which rendered them for the time being the apparent slaves of those whom they had vanquished; and thus entering as a dastardly suit, they followed the people that had been too prone to resign all authority in the form of subjugated vassals, because they possessed intuitive notions that in this inadvertent war they, equally with their opponents, acted in opposition to the wishes and ultimatum of the great man who was admitted upon all sides to govern them as padisha.

Fakereddeen was consequently as great a knave as he was a conqueror, submitting, though involuntarily, to the supreme sway of the pasha for the time being. He detested and abhorred the principle sustained by that functionary, yet he was too well aware that the peace and tranquility of the mountain people were not to be trifled with. He had, therefore, submitted to have his personal dignity outraged, because he hoped that by so doing he might pacify the invasions and the incursive spirit of a people who, with all disadvantages, were capable by numerical force of thwarting their

spirit of independence, and paralysing that feeling which solely contributed to prop up the independence of the mountain hordes.

CHAPTER XX.

THE RED AND THE WHITE TURBAN — SANDYS ON THE DRUSES — FAKEREDDEEN'S MOTHER — FAKEREDDEEN IS BOWSTRUNG — THE SHEHAAB FAMILY — MOHAMET PASHA — BANEFUL POLICY OF THE PASHAS — A YOUTHFUL CHIEFTAIN — THE MERCHANT OF ANTIOCH — HARES' TAILS — REVOLT OF THE NATIVES OF THE BEKAA — THE RENOWNED DAHER — CIVIL WAR — DAHER VICTORIOUS.

> A story, in which native humour reigns,
> Is often useful, always entertains:
> A graver fact, enlisted on your side,
> May furnish illustration, well applied.
>
> COWPER.

SPEAKING of the inhabitants of the territories about Lebanon, and confusing them one with the other as the ignorance of that age was apt to do, that famous traveller, Sandys, whose writings are so exquisitely quaint, yet withal in many points rigidly correct, says that "they are of sundry nations and religions, governed by a succession of princes, whom they call Emirs; descended, as they say, from the Druses, the remainder of those Frenche-men which were brought into these parts by Godfrey of Bollign, who, driven into the mountains above, and defending themselves by the advantages of the place, could never be utterly

destroyed by the Saracens. At length they afforded them a peace and liberty of religion conditionally that they wore the white turban, and paid such duties as the natural subject."

Strange and uncouth as may seem the language of this veteran traveller, who, encountering almost insurmountable obstacles, passed over these very countries at the period that we have been already dilating upon, there is no doubt that his language and his description hold good in many respects, even to the present day. In the first instance, the peculiar uniform described, is even at this hour the distinguishing mark of the Druses; though as far as concerns the theory above quoted, namely, that they entered into Palestine coevally with the Crusaders, this point we have already found cause to refute with something more than the shadow of conjecture. It is remarkable, however, that a gentleman travelling here nearly two hundred years ago, and at the most inauspicious moment, should make allusion to the only singularity which distinguishes the Druse Akals at the present day.

Our friend Abou Shein, who has been the confidant of many of our previous exploits, it will be remembered, decorated his head with the red turban, used as a distinguishing mark for the lower classes and less intellectual portion of the Druse inhabitants: the white turban is exclusively appropriated to the Akals or men of learning But in investigating what has hitherto remained and may still continue almost a

veiled mystery, it is always amusing, if it is not instructive, to quote from the remarks of which such men as Sandys were in that day the originators. We therefore return, with no evasion of the matter immediately in discussion, to the facts quoted by this illustrious and well-authenticated traveller.

He says,—and this is a note-worthy saying, besides being one which bears particularly upon the subject of the creed appended to this work, having been the self-same theory then acceded to and acknowledged by these people,—that " in tract of time they fell from the knowledge of Christ, nor thoroughly embracing any other religion, are indeed of none. As for this Emir [Fakereddeen], he was never known to pray, nor yet ever seen in a mosque. Small of stature, but great in courage and achievements; about the age of forty; subtle as a fox, and not a little inclining to the tyrant, he never commenceth battel nor executeth any notable design without the consent of his mother."

Now it will be recollected that this mother was the very individual person who, at the head of a certain number of Akals, endeavoured to pacify the wrath and terrible indignation of that renowned Turkish general, Hafeez, when Deir-il-Kamar and Bêt-il-Deen, forsaken by the flying chieftain, had been compelled temporarily to yield obedience to his sway. We may recollect that the chieftain, dispirited, fled to the protection of European powers; and finding that protection deceitful and egotistical, thought it better to throw

himself upon the mercies of his own people than sacrifice name, country, and all that is dear to an independent soul, to the aspiring ambition of the then Grand Duke and the Pope of Rome.

Figuratively speaking, we have already in playful mood alluded to what a Druse damsel might accomplish amongst the unskilled beaus and citizens of the West End; but for the perfect realization of such a theme, we have only to return to the descriptive pages of our old and much-esteemed author even at that period. Sandys says, when speaking of the mother of this peculiarly-gifted Druse chieftain, that he could find nothing better or more descriptive of her acts and appearance than the pages of an old and familiar work, the study of which has cost many a brave man worse than the pangs of martyrdom.

> Illa magas artæs Æmaque carmina novit,
> Inque caput liquidas arte ricurvat aquas
> Scit bene quid gramen, quid tortoo confita rombo
> Licia, quid valeat virtus amantis equæ.
>
> Skill'd in black arts, she makes streams backward run,
> The vertues knows of weeds; of laces spun
> On wheels; and poyson of lust-stung mare;
> Fair days make cloudy, and the cloudy fair.
>
> OVID.

So great was his fame, that the Emir Fakereddeen is even to the present day venerated by all classes inhabiting the mountain ranges of the Lebanon. Apparently, his fame exceeded even the notoriety, as far as local circumstances admitted, of the respect and

the fame earned by European commanders. Surrounded by every imaginable difficulty, and by very many local impediments, this marvellously courageous mountaineer succeeded in maintaining indisputable right to the position of an independent and powerful prince.

So terrible, however, are the operations of intrigue and jealousy, that, by the merest accident, his power was paralysed; and within the course of a few hours from the moment he had been enjoying the privileges of his peculiarly fortunate position, he was seized and, together with his children, sentenced to undergo one of the most fearful penalties which the inventions of cruelty and inhumanity could resort to. Fakereddeen, together with all the male members of his family, was suddenly taken and bowstrung; and thus ended the career of perhaps one of the most remarkable and intuitively courageous persons of a people inhabiting the whole Lebanon.

With the successors of this unfortunate chieftain, commenced that barbarous system of internal government which had for its object the paralysis of the spirit of independence, as well as the annihilation of any pretended rights professed by the Druse governors; and for a period of nearly twenty-five years—that is, to the year 1651—the Emirs submitted to the most vicious and blameable source of government.

In that early period the Turks patronised everything that could be conducive to the introduction of a spirit of silent subordination; they, therefore, after the death

of the renowned Fakereddeen, hailed the appearance of men whose greatest fault was the instability of their method of government, and who almost permitted their people to decline into a state of abject serfdom. This, however, was speedily remedied when once the spirit of desperate hardisome had been aroused in the breast of this free people; and shortly after the oppressive system of the goverment had developed itself, the spirit and determination of the people revealed themselves with a powerful reflection of the sweet inspirations of self-taught and inborn independence.

It was about the era above mentioned that the members of the Shehaab family first began to assume the reins of government amongst the Druses; and till the year 1841, with varying success, this family held sway in the Druse capital. One of the earliest of this race of chieftains, falling into the habits and influences which belong to Ottoman pashas, attempted by deceit and perfidious policy to weaken the independence of his own followers. But unfortunately for himself, failing in these deceitful efforts, he brought upon himself a double curse, the detestation of his own people, and the mistrust of those he had attempted to serve at the cost of everything that was honourable and virtuous, and was ultimately committed to prison, and eventually, it is presumed, met with a violent end. Yet before the day of his death a fatal system of civil warfare had broken out and blazed in the Lebanon: indeed

from that early day it may with truth be stated that under no sucessive pasha have these wretched mountains been permitted to enjoy even a year's perfect tranquillity.

In 1668, Mohamet Pasha, of Constantinople, was despatched with special instructions to the Lebanon, for the purpose of effecting a better organisation of a system of government; he established the seat of government at the favourite port of Sidon, which had then been famous as head-quarters for the crusading forces of the Franks, and which has ever since been nominally, though by no means virtually, reckoned in all topographical works under the class of an Aelet or pashalic of Syria.

It would be equally unprofitable and disgusting to trace incident by incident, the misfortunes or successes of this intrepid people; for the annals of their history reveal too often proof positive of their having been victimized by the abominable and systematic treachery of the understrappers of the Turkish government. Every record of any success or advantage gained by the Ottomans has been notoriously marked by duplicity and treachery, such as would never be countenanced even by the Turkish government itself at the present enlightened period; and yet notwithstanding the many adverse circumstances opposed to their success, the Druses, though invariably sufferers, have maintained their position and existence, which is another remarkable proof that this people have been

permitted, unprotected and apparently insignificant in numbers, to resist the aggression of the lords of the land. And when this fact is duly considered, it only confirms the force of that singular prophecy which, indicating so minutely a people in their very position, intimates that they should be left as a beacon and a scourge to try the strength of that more fortunate people who should possess the fertile lands of Palestine.

In 1693 there appeared upon the mountains evidence of that baneful system of policy which had hitherto been pursued by all foreign diplomatists, and which seems to have had for its object the only means of weakening the strength of a self-powerful government. Even at that early period the Emir found to his dismay that the various pashas in the neighbouring pashalics had resorted to the hurtful influence of spies and interlopers, in order to interfere materially with the usual quiet proceedings of his administration; and worked up to a pitch of frenzy, he adopted the stratagem of feigning submission, at the same time that it was farthest from his intention to yield any of his just prerogatives. He succeeded beyond hope in allaying their suspicions, at the same time that he took occasion to concentrate a considerable force at one of the most formidable outposts of these people; and he contrived eventually to repulse all their intrusive efforts; so that coming down to the year 1700, we find the Druses singularly free from the persecutions of their oppressors.

In 1706 a young and inexperienced chieftain assumed the supreme command of the Druse tribes. As might have been expected, his very youth militated against his position; and the surrounding sycophants of the various divans held by the Turkish Sultans took due opportunity of abusing such advantages. First of all they led this boy into the error that they were especially sent to pacify that warlike people over whom he had assumed a command, and then inadvertently and by working upon his want of experience, they endeavoured to prove to him how feasible was the task of assuming a supreme command; till eventually, lost to all proper sense of his individual position, he perpetrated acts which finally led to the extermination of his diminutive power.

It is not far out of place, and it may detract from the forbidding contemplation of that peculiar sway under which the people were labouring, if we are permitted here to quote an absurd and ridiculous fable, one which yet carries with it an undeniable moral as regards the state of the Turkish government and its influence as it existed a hundred years ago, and as, with very little alteration, it remains up to the present moment. The story says that—

"Two men once traded in Antioch, both in their own way merchants of that city. The one was an Armenian, wealthy beyond calculation for those countries where so little money covers such great expense; the other was an adventurer, such as is to be met with

even to the present day, yet a man of strict punctuality in all mercantile negotiations, and one who might have deemed it a sin to cheat anybody out of more than one hundred per cent. clear profit.

"Unfortunately for this last, he encountered in business transactions the keen and sophisticated Armenian, who, amongst other matters relative to commerce, possessed an amazing quantity of hares' tails, an article used almost exclusively by the bankers and other rich Armenians of these little-frequented parts in lining their cloaks, in lieu of sables. Such an article the unhappy speculator had deemed an infallible source of gain; but, much to his astonishment, and as much to his disappointment, he discovered after a few days' itineration, that such things were not in requisition at that moment in Antioch. He was consequently very much dispirited as to the eventual results or profits of this minor speculation; and so, downcast beyond measure, he loitered about the neighbourhood of the city, till he accidentally encountered the Mutzellem of the district, who was himself disguised, when the latter, remarking the peculiar downcast features of our merchant, inquired the cause of his sorrow; and when informed of its peculiar aspects, he voluntarily offered to make due restitution to the speculator for his losses, provided always that he should maintain a perfect silence upon the subject of their interview. This the man immediately promised; and next day, much to his consternation, and infinitely to the

surprise of all Armenian bankers then resident in that part, an edict was issued, which commanded the personal attendance of every individual Armenian residing within the precincts of the pashalic; with this stipulated understanding, that every individual of them was to appear habited, in addition to their regular cloaks and pelisses, with the singular attachment of a hare's tail suspended from each pelisse. Such an edict, incontrovertible in its bearing, compelled every man to resort to this unhappy vendor of hares' tails; and the result was, that the hitherto unfortunate proprietor of this singularly insignificant property disposed of his curious capital at a heretofore unheard-of price, and the individual Armenian who had cajoled him into the bargain was compelled *nolens volens*, for the protection not only of his dignity, but of his estate and life, to accept of one of these singular appendages at the value insisted upon by the vendor, —he was compelled to pay a most exorbitant and unheard-of price."

In order the better to ingratiate certain parties upon the mountains, the Ottoman government resorted to the artifice of bestowing a much higher title than was heretofore adopted by the Druse chieftains, to a friendly sheik; and acting upon this appointment this person proceeded to take possession of his new post at Deir-il-Kamar. This occasioned a sudden but violent collision which gave the Turks a momentary success, but in the main

the advantages gained were only superficial; so a petty warfare, aggravating in its effects and annoying in its results, was carried on between the Turkish authorities and the independent hardy chieftain of the Lebanon, resulting equally in the discomfort and vexation of both parties.

We hear of nothing that is possessed of charms or interest to the general reader, in connection with the history of these people, until the year 1741, when the natives of the Bekaa revolted against the Emir for having imposed upon their generosity by quartering a vast number of troops upon their territory. At this particular period, happily for themselves, a better feeling united the interests and valour of the sheiks of the Lebanon; and their united strength resisted with ease any encroachments threatened by their adversaries the Turks. Meanwhile the latter never permitted a stone to remain unturned in their intrigues and efforts to secure, by some treachery or other, the interests of one party against the interest of another, invariably working upon jealousies for the express purpose of weakening the internal government.

In 1748 the authority and power of the Lebanon Emir was augmented aud confirmed by the Turkish authorities, who conferred upon him the government of Baalbec and the Bekaa; and under the skilful government of this person much of the internal discord reigning amongst the chiefs was appeased: he knew how to work well and happily upon the peculiar foibles of each,

so as to concentrate in his own person their respective esteem, at the same time that by pacific representations and by eloquent arguments he pacified the secret ill-will existing between each party, so that securing their unity and strength he set at defiance the fear of all external invasion.

In the year 1668, Daher, a powerful mountain sheik, carrying his independence further than it had ever been pushed by any of the Druse chieftains, actually obtained, by means of bribery and threats, the powerful position and titles of Sheik of Acre, Nazareth, Tiberius, Safat, and Galilee,—an occurrence unprecedented in the records both of Ottoman and Druse history, and one which gives indication of the miserable state of the Turkish government at that peculiar period, in allowing the government of some of the fairest portions of their territories to fall into the hands of unbelievers, or, at best, dissenters from the Islam faith.

An incident is recorded of one Turk and his two sons, governing between them the three principal pashalics of Syria and Palestine. This, it had been hoped by the Sultan's government, would considerably augment the power and influence of the Ottomans in Syria, as it was natural to expect that the interests of father and sons would be one and the same. The result, however, proved the very contrary; for the Druse chieftain, aided by fortuitous circumstances and by treachery in the enemy's camp, routed the Ottoman pashas in the very first engagement and

entirely discomforted their armies, which were ultimately compelled to treat for the good-will of the Druse chieftain, whilst the Turkish government—tottering on its very foundations, rent with civil discord, and menaced by powerful Northern hordes,—even at that time a victim to the intrigues and ambition of Russia, dared not persist in further resistance against a man whose courage was as undaunted as that of the lion, whilst his people were invincible and his positions and fastnesses impregnable to a dispirited and ill-officered army.

In 1772 affairs took a sudden and unexpected change, the tide commencing to roll in an opposite direction. From the first outbreak of a revolution in Egypt secret emissaries had been at work in the mountains. Many of the Druse sheiks, combining with the Ottoman forces, besieged Sidon. Daher, nothing intimidated by these sudden reverses, galloped off to Acre with an escort of about eight hundred troops, and encountering some Russian vessels of war at Caifa, absolutely negociated with these strangers, by means of bribes, to assist him in maintaining the independence of the mountains against the invasion of the Ottoman Sultan. The whole extent of the Lebanon was thrown into the most pitiable state of discord and rebellion; thousands of Druses under their discontented sheiks embracing the one side, against thousands of Druses on the other; but when it came to a fierce contest, the lukewarmness of their attachment to the Turks became

at once discernible, and the Druses, as though instigated by one impulse, quitted the ranks of the Turks and rushed over to their brethren in arms. The Russians bombarded the towns; and the result was that Daher was again victorious; and the name of this chieftain henceforward became sufficient to inspire the greatest terror in the bosoms of all enemies to the mountain tribes of Lebanon.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE FALL OF JAFFA — DJEZZAR PASHA — NAPOLEON BONAPARTE — EGYPT — PANORAMA OF THE PAST — JOSEPH AND THE ISHMAELITE MERCHANTS — RECEPTION OF JACOB IN EGYPT — THE EXODUS FROM EGYPT — OVERTHROW OF THE EGYPTIAN ARMY — THE HIVITES AND THE DRUSES — ORIGIN OF THE DRUSES — THE DRUSE CREED — MISSIONARY LABOUR.

> . . . Oh, but man—proud man!
> Dressed in a little brief authority,
> His glassy essence, like an angry ape,
> Plays such fantastic tricks before high Heaven
> As make the angels weep.
>
> MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

In the year 1775 Gaza, that desolation which remains to the present day unfortified, was assailed and was easily vanquished by Mohamet Bey and his troops. Not so, however, Jaffa; which having once successfully repulsed the efforts of the Osmanli invader proudly withstood him, hoping by perseverance to support the cause of Daher. Hemmed in on all sides, the Druses durst not stir, the Metuales were discontented, the head chieftain summoned assistance from all quarters of his district; but as these summonses were unaccompanied by bribes

or baksheeshes, they proved of null effect; and too avaricious even to supply the necessary provisions which might have contributed in assisting the besieged citizens and enabling them to resist the horrors of a siege, he refrained from even making an effort to ameliorate their condition. The result was that Jaffa fell and the high road to Acre was thrown open.

This was a terrible disaster, a death-blow to the security of most of those Oriental chieftains, who had counted mainly upon the resistance of their outposts. Daher and his companions fled in consternation when the news of the fall of Jaffa first reached them; and there is no calculating what the results of this fearful calamity might have proved, had not death suddenly intervened and deprived the Egyptian troops of their brave and indefatigable commander. Soon after the demise of this general, and at the very moment that the Ottoman government was professing sincere friendship towards Daher, the Lebanon chief, a Turkish fleet approached Sidon, and a bombardment ensued which too clearly evinced to the confiding mountaineer that he had trusted beyond prudence in a perfidious ally; and too late he found himself surrounded by the most treacherous of treasonable allies. He finished his short but glorious career by being shot dead when in the very act of flight by a common peasant, who lifting his musket took a hazard aim, and pierced the unfortunate chieftain's heart.

In 1788, Djezzar, of infamous memory, named the

Emir Bechir Shehaab, at that time a youth in the twenty-fourth year of his age, supreme governor of the Lebanon. This prince was evidently a tool in the hands of that audacious general, who himself acting the part of an inferior yet usurped such authority as has seldom been aimed at, much less attained, by men of a similar grade in life. With all his barbarity and cruelty, however, Djezzar was a man possessed of the keenest perception as regarded distinguishing the characteristic attributes of individuals. No romance is more fertile of subject, more productive of moral, than the life and career of this Emir Shehaab. Originally intrusted by his superior chief on the mountains as a subordinate tax-gatherer, the youth evinced so much callous heartlessness of disposition that he immediately won upon the cruel sympathies of that villanous chieftain. Djezzar, glad to hear that no tale of woe, no suffering or misery, could arrest the progress of this tax-gathering miscreant, was so delighted to find a congenial spirit, that he absolutely sent messengers to fetch him to his palace at Acre; and there treating him with every mark of distinction, invested him with the pelisse of honour, and sent him to assume the chief command of the Lebanon, at the head of a thousand soldiers.

There was some resistance offered to his progress at the onset; but having successfully overcome this and sent his predecessor to wander as a vagrant and an outcast in the deserts, he established his seat; and the

better to secure the foundations of his position, commenced a system of extortion heretofore unheard of in the mountains, but which contributed to promoting the temporal welfare of the Pasha Djezzar.

At first everything succeeded to his heart's content, but the old man whom he had ousted from his home and country, wandering about like a troubled spirit, too old for immediate action and yet unwilling to resign the reins of authority, condescended to humble himself to a par with his own position; and entering into the presence of Djezzar with a handkerchief tied round his neck, both ends of which, in token of submission, hung upon his breast, the ousted chieftain perfectly succeeded in securing the good-will and patronage of the blood-thirsty Djezzar, and basking under the shadow of his protection sought and nearly obtained the overthrow of his rival.

It would be painful and disagreeable to people of refined sentiments to follow step by step the infamies that now characterise the pages of the history of this country. Whoever paid the highest price was certain of the strongest support; and Bechir succeeded for a time, though in numerical force he was very deficient, in opposing the pretensions of all other aspirants to supreme sway in Lebanon.

Djezzar being obliged, as was his annual custom, to accompany the Hadj for a certain distance, was compelled to leave his protégé to keep his own position against overwhelming powers; these soon defeated and

overcame his position; but Djezzar himself, on his return from his pilgrimage, passed that way, and earned a dreadful satisfaction by the cruel fierceness of his natural disposition; and as was the usual result of all operations undertaken by himself, he completely subjugated the mountains and annihilated their spirit of independence, so much so that though the man and his accursed works have long since crumbled into dust, the very utterance of his name now finds an echo in many a desolate and solitary part of the Lebanon, which seems to groan forth a lamentation for the blood shed in his day.

After this the greatest event that has occurred in the history of this most remarkable people took place, when that successor of the greatest general of the universe having defeated the powers at Egypt, Napoleon Bonaparte marched his invincible forces towards the strongholds of these mountain people. It was a pity to think that so much courage and so great corporeal influence should be thrown away; it was a pity to think that he who counted himself the conqueror of the world should be frustrated by any man inferior to that position; yet so great was the love of liberty, so powerful the influence that induced tribes of different sects and religion to contribute towards the independence of the mountains, that it would have been a miracle indeed had any man personally and unaided succeeded in effecting the subjugation of these parts. So it happened that, unwittingly, the greatest men whose names do honour to the records

of history, assembled in that country of old, and took their own measures for the better amelioration of internal government.

What grand associations are connected with Egypt,—that wonderful country, that land many times blessed and frequently accursed! As we climb up the height of the greatest pyramid, on its summit let us contemplate the changes that have occurred in the long interval since the erection of that great monument to the present day.

From such an eminence, looking toward the land of Goshen we espy travellers coming in that direction,—an old man, with his wife, his children, and his servants; but he is very anxious to get to his journey's end. This is Abraham, with his wife and brother-in-law, travelling from the land of promise, and there is no doubt that they will obtain their position in that promised land. You and I might still encounter similar individuals, as far as costume, features, and other characteristics are concerned. The same people travel to the present day; but there was something remarkable and astounding about this caravan. The halo of glory seems to have accompanied Abraham wherever he sojourned; and even here, as we all know, he became the guest of the lord of the land, until his falsehood concerning Sarah brought retribution upon the head of the prince.

But we are straying from the immediate subject of our theme. Abraham and his generation have been

gathered to their fathers: Isaac, his immediate heir, has also gone to the last account; but if we look steadfastly and firmly towards this said land of Goshen, we observe another caravan approaching. These are Ishmaelite merchants,—men who would traffic their own soul for the gain of a few piastres; men such as existed twenty centuries ago, men such as are to be met with even at the present day. They have rare spices amongst their merchandise, drugs and curiosities from the distant shores of India; but above all, and far more valuable, they possess a slave,—a youth purchased in the wilderness of Judea, sold by his own fraternity into that state of bondage which must inevitably entail a life of misery and hardship.

There is an invisible hand directing the course of this caravan, and protecting this ill-treated young man from the visitation of sin and wickedness. Those merchants are the Ishmaelites who traded with Syria; that slave is the boy Joseph, born to accomplish wonderful results, born to typify the Redeemer, born to be a by-word and a proverb not only amongst his own people, but amongst all succeeding generations who shall place their faith and hope in the stupendous mysteries of Christianity.

And so years roll on: we look out a third time towards the land of Goshen; valiant men in armour, brave soldiers and chariots, sweep forward towards the precincts of the desert, to meet and welcome a distinguished guest. If we confined our attention to demea-

nour and to vestments, there is nothing peculiarly striking about this individual stranger, though he comes with a great company, with many flocks and herds, and women and children. He, in his own insignificance, reckons himself no better than a shepherd. Still that man's history is a link, and a very remarkable one, in the succession of promises made by God to mankind; for from his seed were to spring the most marked characters that have ever been recorded in the pages of the world's history.

Inscrutable are the ways of righteousness! This very man had acquired his dignity and position through an act of deception, with which all readers are familiar. The then existing state of civilisation may be mentioned as a plea for the subtlety of the patriarch Jacob, for he it is whose forthcoming has excited tumultuous scenes in the streets of Egypt, so much so, that even the king from his tesselated palace at Thebes sent forth emissaries to invite the pilgrim stranger to an interview within the halls of the royal palace of Karnac; and the man that went forth with chariots to welcome this pilgrim stranger was Joseph the lost son of the patriarch himself. And if we could draw a picture, or if we could write a poem, never, surely, was there a more delightful theme than the meeting of those two virtuous and excellent men.

Again, with attentive ear we listen to the mournful wail that sweeps through the streets of the

city, and then rises up even to the summits of this tremendous pyramid. It is not the voice of lamentation raised by Rachael weeping for her children, but it is a groan from the oppressed and troubled spirits of those whose sons have fallen a sacrifice to the caprice and iniquity of an Egyptian sovereign; and yet the flushing waters of the Nile float upon their surface a remarkable barge, a boat made of bulrushes, and the queen's daughter stepping aside from her evening walk, rescues the prophet king of Israel from a watery grave.

The cycles of time revolve, and the same boy, grown a man in years and understanding, frustrates the design of the wicked by personal interference, and the slayer is slain, whilst ingratitude, that terrible characteristic of the Hebrew people, compels the defender of the innocent to flee his country.

The pages of past history are blown over by the breezes of time that has been, and from our lofty seat on the pyramids we discern a sight such as is seldom witnessed by human beings, marking the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. A mighty multitude, with their ornaments and ear-rings sparkling in the sunshine, steal forth unheeded or uncared for; but it is only for a time; for mightier than a tempest sweeping over the surface of that hot and little-cultivated country, the chariots of the Egyptians raise a perfect hurricane, as lashed-on and goaded horses tear over the unfertile soil, the drivers of those chariots

bursting with vengeance yet to be wreaked on the heads of the Israelites. But such was not their fate!

A mightier and more terrible doom awaited these scoffers of the creed of the God of Israel! There is a voice of many angry waters—the tumultuous rush of torrents—the desperate scream of despair—the violent death struggle—the foam and the perturbation of troubled waters! The scene is done—the tragedy ended. God in his Almighty wrath has demonstrated one atom of the immensity of his power, and the whole army of the Egyptians has been swept into perdition.

And after this there is a terrible interval, a period when neither the knowledge of God nor the dictates of the human conscience could induce men to forsake the darkest and most absurd superstition. But our field of investigation lies thitherward; we track footstep by footstep on the sandy and little-frequented deserts of Arabia the march of that mighty multitude whose bread was never lacking, whose water flowed from the most stubborn rocks; and yet with all these wonderful sympathies there was something which rendered them inert and stubborn in the actual presence of benevolence, even with the palpable fact before them of their every-day bread depending upon the miraculous intervention of the Almighty.

These people were sufficiently foolhardy to find it in their heart to deny the existence of what they barely dared to refute; and so they wandered forty years without patron or guide saving those in whose authority

they placed no confidence, until at last, in another generation, they reached the land long promised to their ancestors.

Before this period, little if anything was known of those magnificent mountains since then celebrated in sacred Writ, noted in ancient history, recorded as the finest and most magnificent portion of the Holy Land, and famous for having furnished that timber which was requisite for the construction of the Temple.

But since the memorable epoch of the victorious invasion and subjugation of these lands, when Lebanon rose into repute, it is most remarkable that even those invincible warriors, the sons of Judah, who for armour buckled on the shield of the Almighty, even they never could effectually overcome or vanquish that early people who amongst other tribes inhabited the Lebanon; even down to the present hour no potentate, no power, can proclaim that they have effectually subdued these hardy sons of a mountain clime.

It is not within the reach of human comprehension, even did inclination tend in that way, to pretend to ascribe to the present Druses of the Lebanon any lineage which might prove their descent from the Hivites. The fact is that no man living could accomplish such a feat; but as far as human foresight, or rather comprehension, can discern, the present inhabitants of the Lebanon are a people equally as brave as those who at the exodus of the Israelites were permitted to remain there, to act as a check upon their audacity, and to remind them that

with God everything was possible, and without his assistance even the most trivial wars were dubious both in their character and as to their results.

Beyond a doubt, whatever grave theorists may say, there is an inherent virtue in people as a class, a peculiar system and belief which indirectly descends from generation to generation. Though these very people may have in the lapse of time changed their theories and doctrines; and although it might be a feasible theory to presume that the people who have so long held sway upon these very mountains are of the same race as that old people, the Hivites, we have unfortunately no record to refer to, no plausible ground on which to pronounce that such is the case. Although the beginning or the origin of the Druses, however, is and must ever remain an unsolvable mystery to the curious, it is feasible and plausible to suppose that this peculiar sect originated with the freemasons that followed upon the steps of Solomon. Theirs was a mystery that has ever remained closed or a sealed secret, and so is it with the Druses.

But if we follow the dictates of common sense, it stands to reason that the greater probability is, and we are helped out in this suggestion by the creed hereafter to be perused, that their grand point consists in mystery, so that the most learned amongst them get so much involved in absurdly foolish theoretical doctrines, that they confound themselves and are really at a loss to account for any of the dogmas of their creed. This

may be said in a great measure with reference to all heathen religions: there is a something so like absurdity in all their creeds, which induces one to suppose that ignorance must always have the supremacy over superstition; and therefore it appears to me an absurd and futile attempt to endeavour to discover mysteries where none exist.

However much learned theologians may differ from my opinion, it will generally be found the greatest mystery in any outlandish or heathen religion is the gross absurdity of its precepts. No man with ordinary understanding can peruse the creed appended to this work without instantly arriving at the conclusion that either a fool, a madman, or a drunkard, composed it; and yet there is more of the knave than of unwitting folly in it, so much so, that although it is a terrible thing to think that every man and woman of this brave and independent people put their souls into the hands of their Akals, yet these Akals themselves are not in a position to explain away a single difficulty that presents itself in a creed so full of errors and absurdities.

In spite of all the questions about missionary labour in the East, the fact reduces itself to this: teach a man to appreciate the strength of his own intellect; let him know that he has got a mind, and cultivate that mind; and then perhaps something like the shade of perception and understanding may dawn upon him, and he may come actually to know that he

is a being sent into the world to fulfil a specific object, to render to his neighbours by word or action that benevolence which is immediately derived from the fountain-head of all goodness and mercy.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE DRUSES AND THE ENGLISH — IBRAHIM PASHA — POLICY OF IBRAHIM PASHA—OUTBREAK AMONG THE DRUSES—INDIVIDUAL SUFFERING — EUROPEAN POLICY — THE CONVENT AT DEIR-IL-KARKAFÉ — A SHREWD PRIEST — HIS SUCCESS IN AMERICA — SYRIA A FIELD FOR EMIGRANTS — LOYALTY OF THE DRUSES — EFFECTS OF PETTY WARFARE—PROSPECTS OF PEACE.

> O war, what art thou?
> At once the proof and scourge of man's fall'n state.
> After the brightest conquest what appears
> Of all thy glories? For the vanquish'd, chains!
> For the proud victor, what? alas! to reign
> O'er desolated nations.
>
> H. More.

Disquiet still continued to reign upon the mountains, and every occasion concurred in strengthening the link between the Druses and the English government. England was now fast gaining political ascendancy in the East, and that sympathy commenced to exist which has ever since been a remarkable feature in our intercourse with the mountains.

A perfect romance might be gathered from the records of the friendship that existed between the great

English admiral and the mountain chieftain of those days; and perhaps among a people who adhere in a great measure to traditionary law, this may account for the sincere and cordial friendship existing even to the present moment between the Druses of Mount Lebanon and the English; so much so, that were the preference given them, they would at once, and without the slightest hesitation, accept of the chance of being taken under the protection of the British government. Often in friendly conversation I have mooted this subject with them, and as often have they expressed an ardent wish to be recognised, even only as protégés of that glorious people, whose fame extends from one end of the universe to the other; under whose sway liberated slaves may bask, and the Indian, the African, the remotest native of little-known countries rejoice in the title afforded them to claim the privilege of freemen.

But return we to the immediate subject under investigation. Long and bitterly did these brave mountaineers resist, with certain success, the audacious taxation and cruelties of that terrible man Djezzar, until, at length, that man of infamous memory finished his bloody career so terribly tinged with crime and infamy, that even in that awful hour when the hardest and most villanous are presumed to labour under remorse of conscience, this worse than fiend occupied his time in adding to the list of victims whom he had intended to devote to sudden and unmer-

ciful death; and so with the death warrant of upwards of one hundred peaceable citizens, waiting only for signature, under that detestable pillow where his iniquitous head reposed, this man was summoned away to that fearful retribution, that terrible judgment seat, at which even the most righteous and excellent of men tremble to appear, and where such as himself might well indeed call upon the mountains to fall upon them and annihilate them at once.

The last and most alarming outbreak was that which occurred towards the close of the Egyptian occupation of Syria under Ibrahim Pasha, in 1840, when, amongst other contending parties, the English lent earnest aid in freeing these people from the insupportable yoke of a most terrible oppressor. It would seem as though the prophecy of Isaiah had only just then been accomplished. Of a truth, had that ruthless commander remained empowered to exercise sway upon the Lebanon, not a vestige of those mighty and well-famed cedars would have remained to give evidence of the most striking feature, through ages and generations, connected with this district. Ibrahim Pasha was of a truth a speculator in timber; whole forests groaned beneath the axe swayed by his people, and from the Taurus to Lebanon one immense commerce was continually being transacted in transporting and carrying wood and timber of every species from Syria into Egypt. It was there also, apparently, that another and a remarkable prophecy in connection with these

countries seemed to have been perfected, that was the one relative to a highway being established between Egypt and Syria.

It is in connection with the ousting of this bold and independent general that we now review the last important revolution amongst these mountaineers. Sturdy men at all times, they were not the least likely to rebel, and avert if possible the overwhelming oppression of a perfect despot, especially when his supreme and despotic sway became paralysed and began to be alleviated by the knowledge that powerful assistance was at hand to aid them in throwing off the yoke: and yet many of their principal chiefs were deterred from lending that help which might have materially contributed to accelerate the expulsion of the Egyptians from Syria.

The fact was, that Ibrahim Pasha was as great a politician as he proved himself a general; and by the stratagem of retaining the sons and friends of the most powerful Druse commanders in his own service, he compelled them, contrary to their inclination, to refrain from adopting those active measures which would otherwise have considerably assisted the efforts of the allies in expelling the troops of Mohamet Ali Pasha. But at the same time that these people were resisting the encroachments of a foreign invader, they were suffering desperately from the harassing effect of internal and civil discord. It was believed that the difficulties existing

between the Maronites and the Druses had originally emanated from the false internal policy practised by the representatives of various European powers, who found it suitable to their purposes to unsettle the quiet of the mountains, so that the power of the Turkish authorities might be more shackled than ever, and local advantages ceded to each separate government, which could hardly have been acquired at any other epoch.

The cause of the first outbreak originated in a trifle absurdly ridiculous in itself, and yet all-sufficient in a people jealous of each other's position to promote discord and internal strife. One peasant, either a Druse or a Maronite, it is not well ascertained which, encroached upon the privacy and independence of his neighbour by emptying a basketful of rubbish over his wall and into the well-cared-for property of his neighbour. This personal feud gradually expanded, acquired champions on either side, and led to a downright outbreak which ultimately settled down into little short of a civil war. Before this period, a considerable emigration had taken place, owing to the iniquitous oppression of the local government in the Latakia district; so much so, that, as we have already seen, the greater mass of the Druse population migrated to the distant plains of the Houran. During this revolution such atrocities were enacted as can seldom find parallel in the pages of history. As a common evil the mischief it effected was great even beyond

calculation; but it was terrible when we come to enumerate individual instances of injury which not only entailed immense sacrifice of life, but ruined families and estates, and reduced those in middling circumstances to the lowest pitch of destitution.

One individual instance of the injury inflicted at this time was represented in the person of a servant some years in the employment of my father, and who is, I believe, still with the family. Many and many an evening has he entertained or rather horrified me by retailing piecemeal some of the most terrible tragedies transacted during these diffiulties. The loss of wife and sisters, and indeed of any other relation, was an every hour occurrence: hemmed in their huts, whole families were exterminated by being suffocated in the flames, whilst their possessions and effects were razed to the ground. Most of the consular authorities then resident at Beyrout found it expedient to present themselves at the field of disorder, and the influence of some of these tended not a little in checking the most disastrous consequences. There is no doubt that but for their intervention the Druse party must have ultimately succumbed to the combined forces of that enemy against whom they were contending; for however brave and independent in their views, overwhelming forces, and the treachery of those on whom they most relied, must ultimately have annihilated their position. Even as matters stood, so jealously were they watched by contending influences that it was a remarkable fact

at Beyrout, observed even by those least aspiring to the possession of any political influence, that no sooner did one fleet make its appearance off any of the ports in Syria, than another was sure to be signalled; and any communication held with the shore was dogged and watched with that scrupulous precision, and yet with that quaint and eloquent civility that rendered it utterly impossible for either party to be on anything but the best of terms, whilst they were conscientiously spying out each other's actions and even weighing each other's words.

After considerable efforts on the part of European intermediators, peace and tranquillity were once again restored to the mountains; that is to say, the torch of civil warfare was temporarily smothered by the cloak of diplomacy, only to be rekindled five years afterwards with renewed energy and vigour. But none, save those few who have been accustomed to visit the sights of recent warfare, could form any adequate conception of the terrible desolation and misery entailed by a predatory warfare such as is usually waged by these mountaineers. Not a vestige of a village, or a town, or a monastery, was to be met with for miles and miles; fire had in a few hours blasted the intensest labours of a thriving and industrious people: whole fields of grain were laid desolate, mulberry plantations uprooted, and smouldering ruins were all that remained to testify to the stranger the exact site or position of any one village or town. Nor did those

religious recluses who dwelt within the strongholds of their monasteries and convents escape the scourge of warfare.

It will be remembered that amongst other places visited during our rambles with the Druse on Mount Lebanon was the convent at Deir-il-Karkafé, where the brethren so hospitably entertained us, and where the earth yielded its rich increase in fruits and vegetables and flowers. Secluded and quiet, harmless and peaceable, as were those monks, they could not escape from the fury of tumultuous hordes that bore down upon them even in their stronghold and solitude, and literally razed the building with the ground, enriching themselves by sacrilege, depriving saints and altars of rich offerings, and permitting only the monks themselves to wander forth beggars upon the earth.

It was well for them that amongst their number they counted one, a man of shrewd intellect, whose knowledge of Italian and deep reading in European literature gave him peculiar advantages over his brethren, and opened the door through which he might materially aid in recovering them their lost estate.

It was during the last and most terrible revolution of 1845 that this disaster was visited upon these unoffending Christians; and the method deserves recording in which they recovered the means of re-building and re-beautifying the convent even so as to possess themselves of more conveniences than they originally enjoyed.

One day, two or three years after their disaster, a

priest, who had been in the habit of affording us many civilities whenever we visited the mountains, happened to be a guest at our house in Beyrout. In the course of conversation, and whilst the poor man was lamenting the position of the monks and the ruined state of their convent, trying to hit upon some plausible method by which funds might be accumulated sufficient to restore it to its original condition, my father, casually and more in joke than in earnest, suggested to the priest that as he had an American vessel loading in the offing, and which was on the point of sailing for the United States, that he, the priest, should take his passage in her and see what he could accomplish with the Yankees. The priest hesitated only a few seconds, apparently lost in the deepest thought and contemplation; suddenly and earnestly he started up exclaiming that that was just the thing that ought to be done; and, suiting the action to the word, he left my father to prepare strong letters of recommendation for him for persons in the United States, whilst he himself repaired home and speedily packed up a few things for the long sea voyage. Engaging an interpreter of the English language, the priest went on board, and after a due course of sea-sickness and trouble reached the land of Jonathan. Here his case excited universal sympathy, and it only required one or two influential members of Congress to head the subscription list when dollars came rolling in like waves of the sea: indeed so notoriously was this priest

successful in making a collection on behalf of the convent, that the fame of his success spread all over Europe and stirred up the gall and bitterness of his holiness the Pope, who gave strict orders that any further remittances should be arrested in their progress and handed over to the Church at Rome.

To avoid such a catastrophe a third party was appointed to receive and transmit the money, and as he chanced to hold a high official position, none durst interfere with the affair. By a stratagem full of wild romance this little travelled monk gained the sympathies of civilised strangers, and not only amassed a sufficiency to enable him to re-build with a surplus fund the convent on the Lebanon, but also to make on his return from America the grand tour of Europe and the Continent, so that when he came back to Beyrout he was both a travelled and accomplished gentleman, speaking English as fluently as the interpreter that he had taken with him.

A rather remarkable feature of the last outbreak of the mountains, was the fact that the contending parties interfered considerably with some of the American missionaries who were peaceably residing amongst them; and so far did this interference extend, that it necessarily entailed the threats and animadversions of the European powers at Beyrout, so that their independence was more materially threatened than it ever had been before by any contending power. Assuredly, if by their misconduct to peaceable inhabitants, claiming the

protection of such great powers as England, France, and America, these people call down upon themselves their single or united vengeance, it will be the signal for the extinguishing of those beacon-lights which have blazed uninterruptedly upon the heights of Lebanon through centuries of time.

If the mighty armies of Russia, with fleets and fortifications apparently impregnable, have been driven before their victorious arms as chaff is scattered by a tempestuous wind, it stands to reason that however brave in this respect they will meet their equals, and as regards strength and numerical force, their superiors; but it is also to be trusted that such a direful necessity will never come to pass, though one thing is certain, and that is, that if the results of the present campaign tend in any measure to throw open the countries of Syria and Palestine as a field for emigrants, or a country for colonies, then either the one or the other of the two most powerful people inhabiting the Lebanon must give way and succumb to the other, or else leave these regions and migrate to other parts. No sensible government, backed by the reins of power, will submit to the continual inconvenience and violation of the peace that result from the rapine almost annually perpetrated upon these mountains, owing to civil feuds rising out of the most absurd and contemptible causes; but at the same time, whichever party remains in possession, as far as honesty and bravery are concerned, none merit such a country better than the Druses.

Of the present feature, both of the country and the political position of the people on Mount Lebanon, there is not much to be remarked. The gathering of war clouds over the threatened city of Stamboul has for some time past entirely engrossed the attention of all tribes dwelling up there. If they went up to the highest summits of their mountainous country, even to the top of G'bel Sanin, it was like the prophet's servant of old that climbed up to the highest summit of Carmel and gazed anxiously over the ocean in search of that small cloud which was to indicate the coming tempest of rain. Sometimes, even in the midst of the enthusiasm caused by the success and progress of the Sultan's arms, they have even verged upon the very brink of another rupture; so much so, that some eighteen months ago serious alarm was entertained that these people would be again embroiled in civil discord, and that taking advantage of the undefended position and desolate condition of many of the seaports and interior towns, they would carry their ravages even thitherward, and reap immense plunder from the well-stocked warehouses of merchants of all nations.

To their honour be it observed, however, that a steadfast appeal to their loyalty was successful in appeasing the anger on both sides, so that being reminded how injurious at such a moment such an act of hostility might have proved to the interests of the Sultan, they very judiciously relinquished their private piques; and in a spirit of enthusiasm the Druses volunteered to

send a considerable force to unite, under the banner of the Sultan, with that horde of wild warriors who seemed to have migrated from all parts of the East towards the seat of war, when once the banner was unfurled, and the tocsin sounded the alarum.

The preceding brief gleanings from the history of the Druses will sufficiently indicate to the reader that at no time can any two consecutive travellers, following upon each other's footsteps, and tracking each other day by day, after an interval of months and years, ever hope to recognise by the features of the country, or the peculiarities of the buildings, any town or village in the whole of the district of Lebanon; so baneful is the influence of their present system of government—so shocking the aggravating effects of jealousy and petty rivalries.

But the term of such childish fooleries must now be nearly exhausted: it will remain only that these people should be put into direct and frequent communication with the more civilised people of Europe, to convince them of one astounding fact to which they have been now long blinded. This fact is that during centuries of petty and insignificant warfare, they have gained no substantial advantage—reaped none but artificial benefits; whilst, on the other hand, they have slowly but surely been depriving themselves of the only prop which could effectually support freedom and independence. They have been only too effectually undermining their own position, besides in every way

contributing to increase the sufferings and poverty of their descendants.

The vast plantations of mulberry, so often uprooted and replanted, would, in times of peace, have thriven into forests of immense magnitude, and furnished an incredible supply of silk, which would have materially contributed to the coffers of the Druses. The same may be said of the grain wasted in warfare, of the labour destroyed by fire, and of all other property (without in the least alluding to the sacrifice of life) which has been thrown away in useless contentions.

But now that one wing of the eagle of Russia has been palsied by British and French artillery, a permanent peace may be speedily looked for upon the mountains; until such is established, we draw a veil over the past history and the present condition of the Druses, returning with greater pleasure to the investigation of their country and its resources.

CHAPTER XXII.

BEYROUT—THE DRUSE POPULATION—LEBANON—DRUSE VILLAGES—HADDED—SIR SIDNEY SMITH AT AIN ANOOB—BRUMMANA—SALE OF TIMBER—THE VILLAGE OF CORNEILLE—A PRUSSIAN LADY—EFFECTS OF JEALOUSY—ESCAPE FROM PRISON—A FEARFUL TRAGEDY—A VICTIM TO JEALOUSY—DRUSE VILLAGES—IRON MINE.

> Her fate is whispered by the gentle breeze,
> And told in sighs to all the trembling trees.
> The trembling trees, in every plain and wood,
> Her fate re-murmur to the silver flood.
>
> POPE.

LYING under the immediate shadow of lofty and bold mountains, is the city of Beyrout; but with this city we have nothing to do at the present moment, for we must first advert to the loftier and more substantial framework which constitutes one of the noblest pictures in the East. It would be superfluous to say that the immediate neighbourhood of the hills defining the landscape about Beyrout, is, without one solitary exception, the finest and most fertile in the known world; and it would seem to render us guilty of too frequent recapitulation, if we attempted to enter into minute descriptions of every particular hill. When

one portion has been described, every part is therein delineated; and it is only when relatively regarded as to population or importance, that any real practical difference can be supposed to exist. In a work like the present we have, therefore, little occasion to describe village by village; yet there is really so much intrinsic beauty and so peculiar a recommendation to every distinct part, as regards climate, fertility, and industry, that it may be as well to take a brief and cursory survey of some of the more important points.

We may premise before commencing, that the Druses on the Lebanon are estimated to amount to about 29,000 souls, of whom upwards of 6,000 are capable, at a moment's warning, of obeying any summons to the battle-field; but though this calculation undoubtedly does not fall far short of the truth, no exact statistics of these facts have ever been obtained, as births, marriages, and deaths are not recorded by them in any register.

And now to commence our enumeration of the villages. Starting from Beyrout, and passing out of the Bouebat-il-Suntie, we traverse a small sandy plain, and then come upon a rugged and rocky road, riding over which for about the space of half an hour we reach the grove of pines already referred to as the favourite rendezvous of the European denizens of Beyrout during the cooler hours of the evening, and by which road, it will be remembered, we passed on our return from our mountain tour. This grove of pines,

which is the pride and boast of Beyrout, was planted about two centuries and a half ago, by the renowned Druse Emir Fakereddeen, whose exploits have been recorded by us in those chapters allotted to a brief and casual history of the Druses. Their age being thus ascertained, the reader may form some conception of the stateliness of these trees, and of their magnificent appearance and delightful shady retreats, rising as they do over the burning sandy plain, and inviting man and beast to quiet and cool repose during the intensest heat of the noontide hours.

Quitting this grove, our road lies through a very extensive olive plantation, which exceeds thirty miles in circumference; but an hour's ride enables us to cross it at its narrowest part, and we then reach the village of Hadded, at the foot of the Lebanon. Hadded contains only a few Druse families, governed by a Maronite Emir, not in very affluent circumstances, inhabiting a miserable house, and himself labouring in the fields with the peasantry. At a short distance from Hadded is Baabda, another village containing but a few Druse families, and in no respect worthy of attention.

Leaving these, we pursue our way over hills and through valleys, the beauty and picturesque appearance of which we have already had occasion to notice; and after jogging along for a considerable period we arrive at the village of Ain Anoob, situated halfway between Beyrout and Deir-il-Kamar. This village is

the first of any consideration that we encounter on this tour, and contains a considerable number of inhabitants, the great majority of whom are Druses, under the authority of a powerful Druse Emir. From the great number of houses it contains, the extremely pleasant position it occupies, surrounded as it is by exquisite features of landscape, and boasting of a palace which is really a spacious building, well decorated, with a fine sparkling fountain playing in the middle of the yard,—I say from all these considerations Ain Anoob may lay claim to our first consideration.

Apart from all these, this little-frequented Druse village possesses peculiar charms for every English breast, having been the site of the celebrated interview which took place between the English Commodore, Sir Sidney Smith, and the then Emir of Bêt-il-Deen, when that brave and gallant sailor was sent with a small squadron to Syria in 1779, in order to impede the progress of Napoleon. It was here, at this insignificant village, that those two great men vowed friendship for each other; the one offering panniers of rice, to satisfy the cravings of the hungry mountaineers; the other an equally satisfactory gift in the shape of a real bred Arabian mare.

Making a tour through a country prolific in all the most bountiful gifts of Providence, where rich pasturages are thickly dotted with contented and happy flocks, with many such sylvan bowers as might enchant Tityrian shepherds, and which are possessed of charms

for even the most unromantic of unromantic cockney travellers, we pass two villages, Aleya and Ariah, and then we cross the river of Beyrout; then threading our way through the villages of Mansourié and Bêt-Mirih, we reach Brummana. Brummana is reckoned one of the principal townships of the Druses on the Lebanon, and is moreover celebrated in the calends of Beyrout citizenship as a very favourite resort for the Europeans of that city, during the hot and sultry months of the summer.

It would have been difficult, within the compass of many days' journey, to have fixed upon a spot more eligible in every respect, as a summer retreat, than this said village of Brummana; for here persons of the most opposite tastes and dispositions cannot fail finding wherewithal to satisfy their respective cravings for romantic scenery; every lover of the marvellous, the sublime, may be satisfied. The cold, uncongenial heart of the canny, keen Highlander meets with a silent echo to his sentiments, as he jingles the bawbies in his pocket, and looks upon the wild, rocky, barren, uncultivated hill that rears itself up on that side he chooses to contemplate; whilst for the more congenial and susceptible heart there is abundance of vegetation and verdure, wild flowers and blossoms, bees and honeycombs, birds, and gentle breezes; in short, everything that can contribute a theme for the pen of the poet, or the pencil of the painter.

Brummana is indeed a village formed by nature

to satisfy all tastes. The Emir is a Druse, and his palace a solid mansion, which is very pleasantly situated on the confines of a valley perched half-way up the summit of a hill; and in addition, the Druses have a Khaloue, or place of worship, built of solid stone, and surmounted by a cupola—an addition which alone, in the eyes of a Druse, gives greater importance to a township, just as the Christian citizens of any particular town might boast of a cathedral or an elegant church. The principal resource of the natives of this village is the sale of timber, with which they supply themselves from a very extensive valley that runs for some distance round the country, filled with a dense and wealthy forest of firs. Of late years, the increasing population of Beyrout and other seaport towns, and the consequent increase of buildings of every description, have given this trade an impetus which has resulted greatly to the benefit of the villagers; for an incredible supply of timber has been required to meet the demand of even Beyrout alone, so that upon the whole Brummana may be ranked as one of the most thriving Druse villages of the Lebanon.

There is one infallible feature which is always observable in connection with the wealth or prosperity of towns and villages in Syria ; that is, that wherever Europeans settle or make them a place of resort, then, as surely, the condition of the natives is speedily ameliorated, and they even grow wealthy.

In addition to the forest already alluded to, the natives of Brummana have other sources of wealth in the olive groves and mulberry plantations which surround the village, and from whence, by industry and care, they glean a considerable revenue; most of the proprietors of silk cocoons disposing of them annually to those European merchants who are in the habit of speculating in such articles. There is an abundant supply of water, and the soil is of a loamy character, perhaps containing more sand than other matter; but from this fact it is well calculated for the cultivation of the potato, which has yet to be introduced into this part of the country.

Leaving Brummana, and riding through the forest whence its villagers derive their supply, we reach the village of Corneille, also inhabited by Druses under a Druse Emir, once the resort of some of the influential families residing at Beyrout, who were wont to retire to this utter seclusion for the better and uninterrupted enjoyment of nature, and who, hiring of the Emir his castle, revelled in the magnificent scenery that palace commands, and enjoyed nature in her finest and most primitive garb. But the hoot of the screech-owl or the death-watch in the chimney is not more ominous and terrible in the ears of the superstitious than is the now detested name of this quiet and retired village; and yet it is hard that the foul sins of human wickedness should be visited upon the soil or the site where such atrocious deeds have been transacted.

What has rendered Corneille particularly odious to Europeans, is the fact of a terrible tragedy having been enacted there so late as the year 1846. In the summer of that year M. de Wildenbruck, the then Prussian Consul-General at Beyrout, had chosen this village for his retreat, and conveyed his family thither, consisting, in addition to his own wife and children, of a young Prussian lady, who acted as companion to them, and who was descended of a most respectable family. Young, beautiful, and amiable, with all these traits thoroughly refined and brought out by an excellent education, she was indeed the *beau ideal* of what any European nation might be proud to boast of as a fair sample of the ladies of their country. In Syria, she was looked up to by every one who had the good fortune to make her acquaintance, in the light of a perfect angel of goodness and beauty.

There were but few who possessed the melancholy satisfaction of boasting of her esteem and kindness so much as myself, for I know that I enjoyed her good will and kind wishes; though at that period, it must be borne in mind, that I was barely twelve years old, and it was in the capacity of a child that I made and retained her friendship, for the Prussian Consul-General often gave juvenile entertainments, to which most of the children of the more respectable inhabitants of Beyrout were invited. Amongst these I was invariably included, and it was here, and while surrounded with innocence and youth, that I made

a fair estimation of the excellence and worth of this poor and amiable girl.

Unfortunately for her, her surpassing physical and mental attractions were ultimately the cause of her untimely end. She had excited feelings of intensest love and passion in the breast of a menial then in the service of M. de W.; and the foul demon jealousy, weighing heavily upon this monster's villain-like frame, incited him to a crime the foulest ever registered in the records of infamy. He had aspired to possess himself of the heart and hand of this girl; but apart from the difference in their nature, education, and position, the girl's pure affections had already been affianced to one apparently in every respect worthy of them, and this was Mr. S——, the then Prussian Consul at Jerusalem. How often, alas! do we find much alloy in the cup which contains what we miscall human happiness; but there never was a more heart-rending, a more terrible example than the present, nor yet a better moral than might be gleaned from every incident of this transaction. The servant, finding his claim slighted, and the preference given to one in every way his superior, turned deep love into deadly hate, and maddened by excessive jealousy, swore and accomplished a fearful revenge. It too often happens that for want of proper determination of purpose and decision, the most lamentable results ensue, which might have been parried or even effectually prevented, had proper measures and a stern sense of duty pre-

vailed over a false sympathy and a misplaced feeling of esteem. This was precisely the case as regards the terrible catastrophe at present under consideration.

The enraged and baffled servant had publicly and violently declared against what he termed the violation of his affections by the preference shown to his rival; and yet strange to say, in all that fierce moment of bursting and boiling passion, of maddened wrath and frenzy, not one expression of ill-will or spite ever escaped his lips with regard to the man who was miscalled the fortunate possessor of this beautiful and innocent girl's affections: indeed it is evident from after results, that he never entertained any harsh sentiments or ill-will against the man who had usurped the place he aspired to in the affections of Mddle. ——. Against her he openly and frequently denounced signal vengeance, and every one that heard him rave, believed earnestly that the demon within the man instigated him to the commission of an atrocious deed, and that he really would, were opportunity afforded him, carry out his dreadful threat; and yet they let this maniac—this would-be murderer—so to say, go at large. The results were opportunity, and the availing of such opportunity for the commission of the foulest crime ever on record.

Monsieur de W. seems to have been the only person, possibly from pity for the situation and disappointment of a man who may have served him faithfully for some years, who was blind to the fierce unquench-

able thirst for revenge which instigated the wretch to crime. It is true he was constrained to remove him to Beyrout, there to confine him temporarily to an apartment, intending at the first opportunity to ship the wretched maniac home to his own country; but these half measures were ineffectual, for with that keenness and knavery which almost invariably accompany every stage of insanity, the man managed so effectually to elude the watchfulness of his keepers, that by the time his absence from his prison was discovered, he had already gained two hours upon his pursuers.

Great were the trepidation and alarm experienced by Monsieur de W. on this dreadful discovery; and to make matters worse still, his own Cawasses and Janissaries were all absent on various official errands. In this dilemma he sent a hasty message to my father, imploring him without a second's delay to allow his constables to pursue the miscreant; this they did with all alacrity; but when they reached Corneille everything was over—the tragedy had been transacted. The deed was done, and only the now half-witted broken-hearted lover survived to tell how and why it came to pass, that two dreadful corpses, rigid and stiff in death, lay stark upon the earth gazing up into that judgment hall where already they had both appeared—the murderer and the murdered.

According to the unhappy lover's account, he and his future bride, blessed in each other's love and confidence, were alone conversing in a balcony that overhung

the sublimest prospect of nature. Cautiously and unheard, a third party had crept into the room; and unheeded, unnoticed, became a spectator and auditor of all that passed. There is no saying how long he had remained in an attitude of intense and ardent admiration, fascinated by the attitude and voice of her whom he loved and hated, as birds are said to be by the venomous eyes of serpents.

Suddenly her eye caught a shadow, and she turning sharply round, gazed with intensest horror on the intruder. The action was only momentary, but it was sufficient to break the spell: love and admiration vanished in a twinkling—deadly hate flashed over the bosom and subdued every other emotion—jealousy crushed the nature of—what shall I say? for even serpents are gentle to the tenderer sex—of a man—a human being. There must have been something fearful in the glaring eyes of the intruder, for the young girl intuitively shrunk beneath his gaze, and uttering a piercing shriek sprang forward, throwing her arms round her lover's neck for better protection. Too late! the room was filled with light and shook with a loud report; one heart-piercing shriek told how well the villain had aimed.

Through and through—right through her heart the bullet had passed, and without a moan or sigh she fell dead in those arms which would fain have cherished and supported her even till the silvery crown of autumn should have graced their years upon earth, and by

excellence and virtue both might be thought to be ripe for a happier and future world. She was dead, and the murderer had fled; but he only fled till so long as the same destructive weapon which had dealt out death to one so young, so fair, and innocent, could be primed again and ready to send his own blood-stained soul to a fearful reckoning. He shot himself, and so the tragedy ended.

But before we drop the curtain upon this tragedy of real life, I may be permitted to say that the unhappy Mr. S—— only survived the shock to lose his intellect. He was no longer fitted for his duties at Jerusalem—no longer fitted for any duty upon earth; for whether he closed his eyes at night or stared out into the sunlight there was one dismal vision always before them. The last fond suffering look of his young, his only too-much-adored affianced bride; such a thing was too powerful for the texture of the most callous, most ferocious heart. Sorrow chafed his day and night, till at last the final throb ceased to vibrate, and in less than three months after this terrible occurrence his lifeless body was cast into the sea, somewhere on his voyage home to his native country; making the third and perhaps most cruelly-used victim of that foul villain who was the personification of the demon jealousy upon earth.

Not far from the scene where this tragedy was transacted there exists evidence of an extensive coal mine, but it also appears that the quality is indifferent, having

been already worked and found to be of an inferior kind. Such is the report, but I am inclined to think that no proper care or attention can have been devoted to the investigation of this matter, as the natives have too much wood and charcoal, and are naturally too indolent to trouble themselves about such matters. Most probably it was during the Egyptian sway that the Europeans under Ibrahim Pasha first discovered this mine and sank shafts there.

An hour and a half distant from Corneille is another summer retreat of the Beyrout Europeans, known by the name of Boukfaia; this also is a Druse village boasting of an Emir and his palace, with an apology for a bazaar. Not far from hence, near Mittaine, is an iron mine of inferior quality which is being ineffectually worked.

In addition to the foregoing, the principal Druse villages on the Lebanon are Moushmoushi, Baiteer, Ammatour, Muktara, Halouét, Deir-il-Kamar, Bêt-il-Deen, Backleen, K'flnebra, Ain Anoob, Aitat, Shouafat, B'hamdoon, Arayiah, K'farchima, and Mansourié, lying between Sidon and Beyrout, where the Druses are far more numerous. To the north-east of Beyrout are Brummana, Corneille, Mittaine, Shouair, Boukfaia, and Solima, and from amongst these all of any note have been already described.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ANTI-LIBANUS — THE PEOPLE OF THE LEBANON — THE VILLAGE B'SHARI — TERRACES ON THE MOUNTAIN SIDES — METHOD OF CONSTRUCTING TERRACES — PROLIFIC NATURE OF THE SOIL — DRUSE VILLAGES — G'BEL IL-SHEIK — PESTILENTIAL MORASSES — CHARACTERISTIC OF THE DRUSES OF ANTI-LIBANUS — THE VILLAGE HASBEIA — THE PROCESS OF DYEING — A FRENCH OIL PRESS — VILLAGES — MINES — EFFECTS OF MOUNTAIN WARFARE.

Know ye the land of the cedar and vine,
Where the flowers ever blossom, the beams ever shine:
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
Where the citron and olive are fairest of fruit,
And the voice of the nightingale never is mute:
. . . . . .
'Tis the clime of the East, 'tis the land of the sun.

BYRON.

Anti-Libanus, or that portion of the country inhabited exclusively by Maronites, Druses, and Ansyriis, is an extensive tract, properly speaking, of the most elevated in the whole of Northern Palestine. It is difficult to define with any precision the exact boundaries of that particular province, for there are even no defined limits of pashalic authority which can distinctly separate one portion from another, although it is generally under-

stood that every portion is subservient to the jurisdiction of the government of Damascus. The only tangible theory is to draw an imaginary line between these two vast ranges which extend parallel with the coast of Syria from behind Tripoli to within a few miles of the modern capital of Syria. In itself it perhaps comprises a district little inferior to any other portion of that highly productive and prolific land of promise; although the barren surface of the hills is less productive than those of the Lebanon Proper. Barely even yielding that vast supply of brushwood and other fuel which proves of such intrinsic value to the inhabitants of those parts, it nevertheless carries with it its own peculiar value; for besides being interspersed with valleys of the best and purest soil, the more elevated portions constitute an immense reservoir for those countless streams which trickle down to every part of Syria, and which have in themselves been a happy theme of exultation and praise to that great naturalist, that prince of cultivators, the Psalmist David himself, in the words of the 104th Psalm:

> The trees of God without the care
> Or art of man with sap are fed;
> The mountain cedar looks as fair,
> As those in royal gardens bred.
> His rains from heaven parch'd hills recruit,
> That soon transmit the liquid store,
> Till earth is burdened with her fruit,
> And nature's lap will hold no more.

Beyond a doubt, the nearest approach that modern

authors can make to a description of this magnificent country, is to adhere rigidly to the description of those inspired historians who wrote under the immediate influence of the benevolence and mercy of God in a country at that time basking under the peculiar influence of merciful patronage and love. Lebanon was—Lebanon continues to be, in the most comprehensive term—meaning thereby every portion of that mountainous district—a country peculiar in its possession of everything that is beautiful in the creation, yet, strange to say, even from the earliest records that we are possessed of, a country inhabited by an ungracious people, even from the days before the favoured Israelites were permitted to fix their homes here, and to prove in every action a rebellious and ungrateful people—one spurning the evident manifestations of Providence, and disregarding those frequent warnings that would have gathered them, in the words of Isaiah, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings; so also are these fairest sites to-day allotted to men peculiarly distinguished in their reversion of those doctrines which were inculcated either by the primitive Moses, or in the more enlightened theory of the Messiah, whether Druse or Maronite, or Ansyri. They are possessed of features as strikingly repulsive as the country is superb which they are mercifully permitted to inhabit.

However, it is no further our duty at the present moment, than to endeavour to illustrate the various towns and villages which constitute the region of the

Anti-Libanus. The first of any note or importance towards the Tripoli limits is a village, well known to most Oriental travellers from its proximity to the cedars of Lebanon, containing about one hundred and twenty houses. B'shari overhangs the most romantic spots on the banks of the river Kaddisa, surrounded by the most plentiful and luxuriant foliage, and possessed of fascinating and picturesque appearance. The village is surrounded by fruit-trees, vineyards, mulberry plantations, extensive fields of well-cultivated maize, besides other grain, all which speak highly for the natural industry of the people; because, although the soil be extremely fertile, the situations of the mountain sides are so extremely inconvenient, that it can be barely said that there exists a single spot of level ground which exceeds twenty feet by thirty. The unevenness of the ground must have been a source of great anxiety and annoyance to the original settlers in this village, who, with praiseworthy perseverance, projected and carried out a plan which, at first, seemed to oppose insurmountable obstacles, but the successful termination of which has crowned all their efforts with a rich reward.

Finding that the earth was naturally productive, and that the resources for irrigation were very extensive indeed, they were advised by some Italian monks to adopt the at once elegant and useful system of laying the mountain side out into terraces; but even here an obstacle presented itself, which prevented the perfect

organisation of their schemes. The sides of the mountains themselves consisted of two very different soils—the one harder, of rocky texture, which traversed the hill side perpendicularly, and which consequently prevented the natives from laying out their horizontal terraces to a further extent than was admissible in the space between the harder strata. It thus resulted that they could barely, on any part of the mountain side, excavate a terrace broader, in its greatest width, than twenty feet, while the depth or length of those terraces varied according to the position they occupied from the top to the base of the hill-side,—those lowest being narrowest in breadth, though greatest in width, whilst those highest up the mountain were exceedingly narrow, but admitted of great depth; so that when all these excavations or terraces had been prepared, the mountain side presented more the appearance of a gigantic bee-hive than anything to which we could compare it.

But, even this accomplished, only the first step of a gigantic labour has been effected in countries like these, where the winter fall of rain is excessively heavy, and where, in early spring, the torrents from the thawing snow dashed down in impetuous torrents, carrying everything before them, and even rooting up gigantic trees in their course. To impede the devastation and havoc that would inevitably be committed by these, and to prevent their again filling up the excavations with dirt and rubbish, or washing away the

ledges of the terraces, it was found expedient to construct on the loftiest height a powerful stone barrier, from which, by means of simple aqueducts, the greater mass of water was permitted to rush unimpeded over those portions of the mountain where the naturally hard soil had successfully opposed the efforts of the people, and where it in no way interfered with the terraces themselves.

This was not the only guarantee sufficient to procure to the natives a prospect of cultivating these parts, with any hopes of reaping a harvest; for the heavy rains of themselves fell with sufficient force to wash away the ledges of the terraces, and accumulating, formed local reservoirs, which entirely undermined the harder surface of the excavations, and forcing an outlet, washed away all the loose and better soil. It was, consequently, indispensable that some remedy should be adopted, to guard against this infallible evil, or else, as surely as the season came, they might expect to find a whole summer's toil and labour destroyed by a single night of heavy rain.

To this intent, therefore, each separate excavation or terrace was bordered round with a layer of hard rough stones, whilst with regular masonry the ledges of each terrace were built up and securely walled in to the height of two or more feet above the surface of their respective levels, leaving small apertures at either extremity to admit of any surplus water draining itself off.

This work completed, the whole side of an apparently barren and heretofore inaccessible mountain was ready prepared for the purposes of cultivation, and herein, by care and assiduity, the peasant succeeded in rearing luxuriant crops, as also some of the finest fruit trees in those parts. Nor was utility the only object attained, for while peaches, pomegranates, apricots, figs, and other fruit grow to perfection in these terraces, their appearance is singularly diversified and beautified by alternate plots, some growing almost perpendicularly up the sides of the terraces, of verdant wheat crops and other cultivated grain.

Meantime they had not neglected the more sterile and rocky strata of the hill side, which served as capital natural boundaries between the estates of various villagers. It was found that this soil, though unproductive in anything else, would admit of the cultivation of the vine and some of the more hardy species of the fig and mulberry: the consequence was that they were immediately converted into Koorms, or mountain vineyards, and the grapes produced by these proved of a remarkably fine quality; so that in point of fact every available inch of ground is covered with luxuriant cultivation, and the very sources which serve to carry off superfluous water in the winter, facilitate the natives in irrigating their gardens during the sultry months of June, July, and August.

As a further proof of the natural industry of the natives of this village, it may be stated that

they rear a considerable number of silkworms, which produce a very fair quantity of common silk, besides manufacturing a species of cotton shawl very much in vogue among the natives of Syria, who use them for winter girdles. They have also in some of the surrounding plains extensive tobacco plantations, from which Tripoli and some of the surrounding towns draw their principal supply. Though not actually inhabited by Druses, B'shari is strictly included in the Druse district, and is subservient to their Emir.

The next place of note that is worthy of any record is the Druse village of Souyre in the Anti-Libanus, which is exclusively inhabited by Druses, who though of scant population and pastoral habits, contribute their iota both towards the revenues of their Emir and the strength of their tribe. Passing through the valley of Anti-Libanus we come to the mountain called G'bel Il-Sheik, supposed to be the highest mountain in these parts, its summit being perpetually covered with snow, and which is situated due west from Damascus, being under the sway of the Druse Emir at Rashia, another unimportant Druse village, an hour and a half distant from one of more consideration called Haimte. The most striking feature of this latter village is the fact that its Druse inhabitants appear strictly to adhere to the tenets of the Mohametan law, being scrupulous in their attendance to rites and ceremonials, and governed by a Turkish Dervish conjointly with their own peculiar Sheik. The people of this village are principally

employed in the rougher cultivation of the soil, growing coarser kinds of grain and tending large flocks of goats, from the milk of which they manufacture a not very palatable cheese. Most of them derive their origin from the village of Rashia, whilst several of them are intermarried with the inhabitants of Beri and Rafit, two insignificant villages which are strictly pastoral.

At about an hour distant from Haimte, situated to the left of a beacon track, are Denibi and Mimis; whilst further on, and to the right, is Sefa; all three Druse villages, but situated in a country very slightly cultivated, and where everything bears evidence that were it not for the great love of freedom and independence, few men would submit to dwell amongst such an utter desolation as surrounds them, and encircled as they are during winter by almost impenetrable snow, and in summer time by pestilential morasses, which emit aguish exhalations during the fiercer heats. But it is a remarkable fact that the baneful influences of the unhealthy soil they inhabit are never indelibly impressed upon the features and frames of the Druses of these parts; so much so, that they are with facility distinguished from those inhabiting the more salubrious Lebanon, by their robust appearance.

Not but that these latter are in common with all this race a remarkably fine and robust people; but they are naturally so vigorous that their constitutions repel the insidious and baneful attacks of the atmosphere; so that they are barely subjected to inconvenience, where other

races of human beings could hardly exist. This is always more forcibly prominent when these natives are brought into comparison with their brethren inhabiting those parts in the vicinity of Beyrout and Sidon. Whilst the former present to the spectator the perfect embodiment of robust health, gigantic strength, and an iron constitution, the latter, though indisputably equally fine men, with all the appearance of strength and sinewy texture, lack that ruddy complexion which is such a distinguishing mark amongst the people of the Anti-Libanus. Moreover there is a peculiarity in the hair as well as in the complexion, the people of Anti-Libanus having frequently lighter-coloured hair, besides possessing an uncommonly fierce and independent mien, which at once envelopes them with an aspect of a wild, free, predatory people, such as might be expected to be met with in the more remote parts of the highlands of Scotland; whilst the Druses of the Lebanon carry about with them an air of refinement and appearance of gentility which at once classifies them as the better and more enlightened people of that race.

Three hours further on than the villages inhabited by these people, on whose appearance we have so lengthily dilated, and in a direct course south-west by west, we pass Ain Ephjer; and after riding two hours over a desolate country, whose rocky surface admits of little or no cultivation, we pass over the bridge erected over the river Hasbeia, not far from its sources; and another hour of toil and scrambling brings us to the

village named after the river, which is situated on the top of a mountain of no considerable elevation, but which may be almost ranked as a town, from the fact of its containing nearly eight hundred houses, and being the residence, at some seasons of the year, of the Greek patriarch of Damascus; besides being governed by a Druse Emir, who is in some way subject to the authority of the Pasha of Damascus for the time being. Its inhabitants are of mixed creeds, but by far the greater proportion are Druses, to whom also the wealthiest parts of this district belong. The chief occupation of the natives appears to be that of dyeing cotton cloths, which are also here manufactured, and which are of that ordinary quality so commonly used by the peasants of Syria: one of these dye-houses in particular is very extensive, and gives occupation for more than a third of the people engaged in this trade.

The process employed in dyeing these cloths is simple and primitive in the extreme. On the outskirts of the village are extensive ranges of large sized copper cauldrons placed upon temporary furnaces, which, being built of brick and mortar, admit of the retention of very great heat; and vast quantities of fuel, which is luckily plentiful in the neighbourhood, are consumed for heating these coppers. The dye itself is constituted of that coarser indigo imported into Syria, mixed with blue gall nuts, the produce of the country round Aleppo, where these nuts grow in abundance and to perfection, and a small quantity

of muriatic acid. The whole matter is then dissolved in boiling water, and the cloth, being thrown in, is permitted to remain, only being turned over now and then, till the water in the boiler cools sufficiently for a man to insert his hand and draw the dyed cloth out. The next process is that of gently wringing the dyed material, never using too much force lest the colour should not have perfectly saturated the matter. It is after this that the long building erected by the dyers is made use of; in it the wet cloths are suspended to dry, protected so far as the building will admit, from the vast quantities of sand and other matter which would necessarily adhere to it.

When the cloth is dry, it is taken down again and subjected to the same process, or not, according to the lighter or deeper tinge of blue which the dyer wishes to impart; in any case, the cloth has eventually to undergo a thorough washing, for which purpose they resort to the banks of the river, close at hand, and subject piece after piece to the operation of being thoroughly wetted and well beaten against the smooth hard surface of rocky slabs. This detaches any minute particles that may have adhered to the damp cloth, and it furthermore tests the efficacy of the dyeing material used. If the process has been successful, the cloth loses very little colour; if on the contrary, the material used has not been properly mixed, then the whole stream for miles down assumes a beautiful ultramarine colour, and the cloth has to be re-dyed.

From the nature of their avocations, the natives of Hasbeia are the dirtiest-looking people imaginable, with hands and feet perpetually covered with indigo, and with their faces smeared over with blotches of various shades. The calling is said to be the most unhealthy conceivable, owing to the various gases the men are continually exposed to. This may be very pernicious in countries where dyers are compelled to follow up their avocation in close and confined rooms; but here, where the everyday work is done in the open air, the men experience no inconvenience: on the contrary, they are as a body a robust, healthy people.

Many of the Druses have considerable olive plantations in this district, which formerly were manufactured into the ordinary quality of oil used by the natives. Now, however, that a French firm has established an oil press at Tripoli, these people, in common with the natives of many of the other villages, prefer selling their crops to them in lieu of converting their olives into oil. The Emir occupies a well-built castle, erected purposely to answer the ends of a stronghold for the Druse party during any outbreaks or disturbances in these parts.

There are not less than twenty-three considerable villages dependent upon this place. These are called Banias, Rashit-il-Fackar, Sheba, Mirié, Kéfar, Kankabi, Hebber, Wahshdal, Zooya, Ain Tinti, Ain Sharafi, Ain ahmet-Banias, Ain Ania, Ain Feedi; and besides these, Shoûwa, Karribé, Zoura, Jubita, Kéfar-Hammam, Feredes,

Bourkush, Rahle, and K'fernaur. The whole of this extensive district, though presenting a dreary and sterile feature, is in reality, perhaps, the wealthiest portion that can be named as belonging to the Druse territory. There are, in fact, probably mines of immense wealth concealed under the rougher strata of the surface, the ground being strongly impregnated with iron, and yielding abundance of other metal, which has never been properly investigated, with large veins of bitumen, and every appearance of the neighbourhood having been once subjected, probably many years since, to the mining skill of the people that possessed this country. To this day there remain several deep shafts sunk in the neighbourhood, but long since deserted, and which are overgrown with bushes and other verdure, presenting dangerous pit-falls for the incautious wayfarer.

After Hasbeia, and close to the village of Banias, which is one of those we enumerated as dependent upon it, is the village Medjal, situated on a table-land at the summit of a mountain of some considerable elevation, and inhabited principally by Druses, the proportion of Christian families being only as one to a hundred. The natives of this village are all expert huntsmen, the neighbourhood affording them ample occupation for their skill and courage, for here during the intenser cold of the winter season, bears, wolves, and even tigers abound, whilst stags are to be very frequently encountered.

The Druses of this village, in common with most

of those inhabiting the country about the neighbourhood of Damascus, pretend to be rigid disciples of the Mohametan faith, observing the Ramazan with scrupulous attention. But this cannot be regarded as affording any clue to their real profession of faith, as some of these very people have been known even to profess Christianity so far as to employ the services of a Latin monk, whilst at the same time upon every occasion of their visiting Damascus they attended the mosques there publicly. The village of Kafoura is the last of any importance amongst those belonging to the Druses in the Anti-Libanus.

As a general fact it may be stated that during the frequent disturbances amongst these people no perfect estimate can with correctness be obtained relative to the size or population of their villages, or indeed of the exact site that these may occupy, from one year to another. Such is the mutable state of their affairs, that where we may to-day encounter apparently large and well-inhabited villages, with country presenting every appearance of fertility and cultivation, a year hence the same spot may present a perfect desolation, with nothing but the crumbling ruins and smouldering ashes to indicate the once residence of man, and bearing testimony to the ruthless and destructive effects of the wild mountain warfare carried on in these parts, when houses and vineyards, convents and palaces, are alike swept away by the devouring flames ignited by those parties who for the time being are victorious.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE HOURAN—KANOUT—ANCIENT MENTION OF THE HOURAN—THE HOURAN THE GRANARY OF SYRIA—RUINS OF A TEMPLE—EZRA—MILLSTONES—DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDINGS—RUINS—STONE DOORS—SCARCITY OF WATER—JEALOUSY OF THE NATIVES—AN ANCIENT AQUEDUCT—SUPERSTITIONS OF THE NATIVES—BURIED TREASURES—THE COUNTRY OF IDUMEA.

"And the east side ye shall measure from Hauran, and from Damascus, and from Gilead, and from the land of Israel by Jordan, from the border unto the east side."—EZEKIEL xlvii. 18.

TAKING the mountains of Kelb Houran as a central starting point for the purpose of facilitating local description and position, we shall commence our tour in the Houran by a brief description of those villages situated between this point and Damascus on a nearly straight line following the banks of the river Kanout.

First in this list is the ruined city of Kanout, situated upon a declivity on the bank of the deep stream which flows through the midst of the town with steep banks, propped up by walls in several places. The approach to these ruins is through a forest of stunted oaks and other trees with only partially cultivated fields. To the south-west of the town is the copious

spring, and approaching it from this position, the first thing that attracts the attention of the wayfarer is a number of high columns upon a terrace at some distance from the town itself. These, on closer inspection, are found to be very imperfect, but they extend over a space of nearly one hundred and twenty feet in length by sixty in breadth. There were originally six columns on one side and seven on the other, but several of them have already fallen to their foundation, and each year diminishes their original number; still there is sufficient remnant to testify that great skill and art, as well as beauty and architecture, were originally displayed in their erection. The capitals are elegant and well finished, and the pedestals upwards of five feet high.

The former town admitted of two distinct divisions, the upper or principal, and the lower or more insignificant quarter; and wild oaks having sprung up among this part entirely secludes its ruins from the inquisitive eye of the antiquary. Inscriptions have been found here and copied by former travellers, and the remnants testify to the ruin having once the claim of being classified as a distinguished city, though it is difficult to calculate at how distant a date. The supposed circuit and extent of this ancient city have been calculated to be between two and three miles; and standing by the spring, the traveller may command an extensive and uninterrupted view of the beautiful plains of the Houran, bounded on the opposite

side by the snow-capped mountain of the Haish. Before entering further into the plains of the Houran, we may be permitted to digress for a few minutes from the immediate subject under consideration to recapitulate the leading incidents in connection with its history.

So far back as the year 574 B. C., the prophet Ezekiel refers to these fertile plains in the vision respecting the borders of the land, (xlvii. 16-19,) "Hazar-hatticon, which is by the coast of Houran." . . . "And the east side ye shall measure from Houran and from Damascus." It is, therefore, evident that even at that period those countries, to the south of Damascus, were held in considerable estimation by those early and fortunate possessors who had emigrated from a state of serfdom and bondage to find themselves led on by an invincible hand to the conquest of the fairest and most fertile countries in the world. Indeed, the whole plains and the rocky wilderness to the southward of Damascus collectively, were the first fruits reaped by the disobedient Israelites after their forty years' sufferings and wanderings in the wilderness.

Even before the subjugation of the land of Canaan, the allotment to the favoured tribes had taken place; and that blessing which extended itself all over the land of promise here, even up to the present day, is developed in the unbounded fertility of the plains. Under the Roman sway the whole of

the Houran, distinguished by them as Peræa, was divided into six cantons, the most northern of which was that of Abilene, between Lebanon and the Anti-Libanus. The whole of this district, though offering no very insuperable obstacles, has been seldom satisfactorily traversed by European travellers, though it is acknowledged by such bold and enterprising men as undertook this circuit at a period when the uncivilised state of Turkey rendered travelling a very difficult and dangerous affair, to be literally teeming with the most interesting ruins and remains.

To the present day the Houran is the main prop of the sea-coast of Syria as regards the staple supply of grain, both for exportation, as well as for the consumption of the towns and villages along the sea-board. The surface of the country is generally undulating, whilst almost every prominent position is occupied by Roman ruins, now patched up, and serving as the habitation of the villagers.

Continuing from Kanout, we come to the village of Saleem, at the entrance to which are some very handsome ruins of an oblong shape, whilst the whole area of the village is filled up with dilapidated fragments of what may have once constituted a magnificent city. The only vegetation of any kind to be here encountered is a few stray tobacco plantations; and the poor people that reside here, who are entirely Druse families, only consent to remain in this exile to escape from the more oppressive taxation of the sheiks owning

the better cultivated lands. This village is situated upon a bank of the river which flows from Kanout; and, amongst other ruins, it contains the fragments of what was once, beyond a doubt, a beautiful and costly temple, though small in proportion. But all of the beautiful Corinthian columns have been shaken to the ground by the violent shocks of earthquake which so oftentimes pervade this latitude; and though the ruins occupy upwards of a mile in circumference, they have been so utterly devastated by the ruthless hand of this destroyer, that they in reality constitute little better than a heap of rubbish.

Travelling along the banks of the river, we pass Deir-il-Leban, an inconsiderable heap of ruins; whilst further on, on the left bank, is Kafar-il-Locha. Upon a low hill, still to the right bank, is Deir-il-Ahkwat, or the Brother's Monastery, now also an uninhabited, crumbling mass of ruins; next to this, Nejran, in which are several ancient buildings inhabited by Druses; and continuing on the right bank of the river, we come to Baara, a village with several mills, which are worked by the force of the torrent during the winter season. One hour further on, but on the opposite side, is Kurbet Hariry, a village under the control of the sheik of Ezra; whilst, two miles further on, still bordering on the stony district of the Ledja, is Bousa.

At the further extremity of this mountain torrent, and where its feeble waters exhaust themselves, is

Ezra, a very considerable town both as concerns its present and its former condition. The ruins of Ezra are estimated to occupy a circumference of upwards of three miles in extent; it is now one of the principal villages of the Houran, containing several Druse families amongst its mixed population. Lying within the precincts of the Ledja, within a short distance of the arable ground, it is entirely dependent for its supply of water, excepting in the depths of winter, upon local cisterns. Its inhabitants are a very industrious people; but the most remarkable article manufactured in this town are those millstones so indispensable to all households all over Syria: blocks for forming these are brought from the stony interior, and here hewn and shaped by native artizans. These millstones form an article of export commerce carried hence even as far as Aleppo, and varying in price from fifteen to sixty piastres, according to their size, being preferred to all others on account of the hardness of the stone from which they are manufactured, which stone is only to be met with in the Ledja.

In addition to this article of industry, the people of Ezra manufacture rough cotton stuffs, much used by the natives of the Houran.

The inhabitants continue to occupy those massive and solid edifices which have stood here through centuries of time, in defiance of the most merciless earthquakes; and the general form of the buildings is that principally adapted for the usages of people

inhabiting a hot and sultry country. Each dwelling is entered by an insignificant entrance, easily blocked up in case of assault or invasion, but which conducts one into a square yard, round which are the apartments. The entrances to these apartments are also extremely low; the whole building constituting a species of fortification, within which, the court-yard door being secured, the inmates of the house are safe from molestation, as also secure from the prying of the inquisitive.

Here, under the open canopy of heaven, during the most sultry season of the year, the family congregate at nightfall, to enjoy their frugal repast, to relish their pipes, to sing their wild ditties; or when exhausted, spreading out their mats, repose upon them, refreshed by the copious and cooling dews of heaven, whilst during the heat of the day, these very mats, and other material which serve as bedding for the night, are suspended over head in the courtyard, so as to exclude the fierce rays of the sun, at the same time that they are being thoroughly aired and purified for nocturnal use.

Barred in with all his family, one solitary inhabitant might, from the peculiar construction of his dwelling, set at defiance twenty invaders, by retreating as necessity obliged him, first from the courtyard into one of the principal chambers, and so from this one into all the others, till he should emerge again at the opposite side, to the room where he took refuge.

All the houses are built upon arched foundations, which, in a great measure, accounts for the fact of their having resisted the most turbulent subterranean shocks, which spread devastation through many villages and towns in the same latitude.

A very remarkable feature in connection with the great antiquity of this place, is the singular fact of several of the buildings possessing doors hewn out of the solid piece of stone, which work upon hinges of the same material, and which must assist, when properly closed, in more effectually excluding the heat, than any other material which could be used for such a purpose.

Amongst the ruins abounding in the neighbourhood, is a remarkable range to the south-east of the town, known to the natives under the singular appellation of Sarayat Malek-il-Asfar, or Palace of the Yellow King, an imaginary potentate, whom Burkhardt considers synonymous with the Emperor of Russia, though, strange to say, of late years, and since that country has been unfortunately subjected to casual visitations of that dreadful scourge, the cholera, the natives have distinguished this epidemic as the *Hawa-il-Asfar*, or the Yellow Wind, which is a singular coincidence at the present moment, when the so-called yellow Emperor has become even a greater scourge to the countries of the earth than his namesake, the horrible Yellow Wind.

There is a Greek convent and church at Ezra, besides an edifice dedicated to that favourite Greek

patron saint, St. George. Water is so scarce in this part, that the inhabitants are entirely dependent upon the not long duration of the summer months; otherwise they are compelled to quit the place, bag, baggage, and all; and so little are they troubled with furniture, or other household decorations, that when this is the case, they seldom return again to the place they have quitted, generally searching for some spot where the supply of water is more copious. But there is an evident display of inertness on the part of the inhabitants, in not providing a sufficient number of reservoirs, which might easily, with little trouble and no expense, be erected amongst the great number of ruins which are uninhabited in these parts; so careless, however, are they, so unwilling to labour, that though their flocks have frequently to wait until midnight before their turn can possibly arrive for being served with water, they prefer this inconvenience to the trouble of preparing more receptacles.

With Ezra terminates our tour along the banks of the Wady Kanout. Retracing our steps, we make a fresh starting point from the village of Saleem, whence, proceeding nearly N.E., we reach the village of Mordouck, famous only on account of its abundant supply of water, being situated at a considerable elevation upon the plains of the G'bel Houran. One hour and a half further to the eastward, is Telshouba, the seat of some of the principal Druse Sheiks. The village is beautifully situated at the foot of one of the neighbour-

ing mountains, and from the amazing quantity of ruins which surround it, one is inclined to believe that it was once an opulent and populous mart, much resorted to by the neighbouring townspeople. It is said originally to have contained eight principal gates of entrance, a greater proportion than many of the leading cities of the East, at the present day, can boast of.

According to some ancient travellers, the Druses inhabiting this part enjoy a very dubious notoriety for inhospitality, or rather, are inimical to the encroachments of any people, saving those of their own peculiar sect; and have, on more than one occasion, compelled travellers to relinquish their researches, and retire from the field of investigation. This compulsion arises, beyond a doubt, from the peculiar notions entertained by the people in general, that Europeans possess a talisman, by means of which they are facilitated in discovering and exhuming long-hidden treasures.

It is therefore with an eye of exceeding jealousy that they watch over the proceedings of antiquity hunters, considering, beyond a doubt, that any man who would pause to inspect a crumbling mass of ruins, or any old desolate building, must have a more intrinsic excitement thereto than the simple love of research. They cannot possibly conceive that the history of defunct people and cities can be really possessed of such great charms for the lovers of antiquity.

One of the most remarkable ruins in the neighbour-

hood of Telshouba is the remains of a very ancient aqueduct, which in former years supplied the town with water; some of the arches are remaining, reaching to a height of nearly forty feet, and giving the casual spectator a capital conception of what might be produced by the formation of a railway to communicate with the most distant parts of Caramania and Mesopotamia. At the termination of this aqueduct is a massive structure, supposed originally to have constituted a reservoir for the supply, not only of the town itself, but of all the surrounding villages. Like Ezra, many of the doors are composed of massive stone, and the inhabitants fabricate cotton cloths for the manufacturing of coarse shirts, but their fabrics are of a very inferior quality.

Passing some inconsiderable villages, we come to the last place of any importance, Im-il-Zeitoun, inhabited by between thirty-five and forty-five families. Here, again, travellers find cause of complaint owing to the same absurd notions regarding hidden treasure, which the people invariably imagine that the traveller has come to exhume. Indefatigable might be the researches of any antiquity hunter amongst the ruins and walls of this desolate old place. Syriac and Grecian hieroglyphics cover every portion of yet undilapidated walls with superstitious peculiarities singularly their own. The natives of this village have peculiar objections, and present insurmountable obstacles to the investigations of modern European travellers.

Always superstitious and suspicious of the encroachments of any foreigners, from the days of that unassuming yet hardy adventurer Burkhardt, they have invariably resisted the quiet inquisitiveness of men of intellectual capabilities. They have foolishly imagined that the travellers had greater instigation than the satisfaction of a personal curiosity in prosecuting their researches; they found it remarkable that men proverbially possessed of intellect and understanding, should, with such disregard to the superstitions of the natives of the land, disinter monuments and treasures of bygone centuries for the simple sake of adding to the information or advancement of civilisation. No such notion could ever be practicable to a people whose intrinsic valuation of every good afforded by creation rested, and that wholly, upon how much or how little personal, and not mental, benefit might be derived from its acquisition.

Those illustrious strangers, who under the guise of a barbarism familiar to themselves, risked their comforts and ventured their lives for the express purpose of disinterring old and valuable records relative to a country, if not a people, familiar to all educated Europe, from the figure they cut in the annals of the world's history before such an epoch as what is called modern civilisation existed, before the western and northern powers had risen into any significance; these venturesome travellers experienced every impediment which barbarism could present as a stumbling block to their

progress, or to the advancement of those discoveries which might materially assist in the furtherance of our geographical and other attainments; even to the present day such detriment exists. Learned and inquisitive travellers who have ventured to penetrate into these parts, besides the imminent peril they incurred from the inhospitality of most inhospitable people, found an invariable check to the furtherance of their projects from a superstitious indifference of the natives of these parts to the exhumation of any trifling stone or monument which might have contributed, through the learning of those attempting their investigation, to universal information.

It is a strange theory, yet one undoubtedly based upon some ancient but substantial evidence, that every peculiar stone or rock marked by inscription or device, or in any way inviting the attention of the stranger, was there placed as a record of buried treasures. There is no reason to doubt that, in a country so often subjected to sudden commotions, people were in the practice of interring treasures and other property which did not admit of being transported or removed in the moment of sudden exigency; and consequently, even down to the present hour, these people are particularly jealous of any excavations which the natural researches of science may give rise to, but which they falsely attribute to motives of self-interest.

What is a more striking incident than everything else, in connection with the obstacles continually to

be encountered in travelling over or investigating the shores of this country, is the indubitable fact of its carrying with it, even to the present moment, unmistakeable symptoms of the whole land labouring under the effects of that terrible curse, already alluded to, which has been cast like a dreadful pall over the whole country of Idumea; because, amongst other fearful assertions recorded against this part, it was clearly understood that no foot should successfully traverse, no eye investigate the fearful mysteries of the interior economy of a land condemned to perpetual desolation and barrenness, through the insubordination and wickedness of the thankless people into whose hands it was originally consigned, as one of the most fertile provinces of a land then teeming with produce.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE ORIGIN OF THE DRUSES—THE DRUSES AND THE HIVITES—COMPARISON BETWEEN THE DRUSES AND THE HIVITES—IBRAHIM PASHA—COURAGE OF IBRAHIM PASHA—THE DRUSES AND THE OTTOMAN GOVERNMENT—THE COUNTRY ROUND JERUSALEM—CHARACTER OF THE DRUSES—THE DRUSE CREED.

"Now these are the nations which the Lord left, to prove Israel by them—namely, the Canaanites, Sidonians, and the Hivites that dwelt in Mount Lebanon."—JUDGES iii. 1, 3.

IN the preceding chapters, I have given a brief historical sketch of the Druses, and carried the reader with me through their romantic and picturesque country, stopping to describe all that is most worthy of observation, and likely to engage the interest, in every town and village. I shall now conclude my work upon these very remarkable mountaineers, with a few speculations as to their possible origin, and with some final observations upon their creed, or form of religious belief, upon their akals, or priests, upon their practice of medicine, and upon sundry other matters relating to their social customs and peculiarities.

It has often perplexed the historical investigator, to trace the parent-stock from which the Druses have descended. The earliest date which I have mentioned in relation to circumstances of Druse history, is the year 1517. That they peopled the mountains of the Lebanon prior to that time, is indeed known; but beyond the bald fact of the knowledge of their existence there, all completer information respecting them is shrouded in the mists of legend and tradition. Still if we compare certain passages in the sacred narrative of Biblical history with subsequent events, and the records of modern time, we may perhaps find some rays of light to guide our path, in the obscurity which hangs over the early career of the Druses.

Looking at the known history of this interesting people, there is one salient fact which will not fail to impress every observer; and it is that, throughout all periods of the Islam government, no people subject to their dominion has, on the whole, experienced so much toleration at their hands as the Druses. While Christian sects were being persecuted by different Ottoman commanders, with the most merciless severity—flame and sword being their habitual portion—this happy, courageous, and free people seem to have maintained a peculiar and exceptional immunity. In a great measure, they owed this result, no doubt, to their power to withstand the Turkish arms, to their heroic bravery, and their unextinguishable patriotism.

Now, if we glance back into the past, we find that

while the ancient Israelites, stimulated by miraculous victories, and led on by the stern precepts of the Old Law, intolerantly swept away all the people whom they encountered in the Promised Land, there were a few heathen nations that it was the Divine pleasure to exempt from destruction; and amongst these, the Hivites, then inhabiting the Lebanon, are specially mentioned. The Hivites were not "smitten with the edge of the sword;" they were not exterminated like the nations around them; and it is stated in the pages of Holy Writ, that they were spared for the express purpose of acting as a curb upon the evil dispositions of the haughty Israelites, who were too prone to exhibit black ingratitude, and rise against the merciful protector who had led them out of the house of bondage.

It would unquestionably be hazardous to lay down in any dogmatic way, that the present occupants of the Lebanon are to be traced back to that ancient people who were empowered to resist the children of Israel, who "drove out all from before them." It would be presumptuous, no doubt, to attempt to establish a *positive* identity, after the long lapse of ages, and through so dense a haze of obscurity, between the old Hivites, and the modern Druses; and yet there is no plausible plea to imagine that they are not descendants from this hardy race.

There are, indeed, in support of the affirmative position, some striking points of analogy and singular

similarities in their respective histories, and in their personal and social attributes.

The Israelites, whom Joshua had led into the land of Canaan, were a powerful and all-conquering people ; and the Hivites of those ancient days must have been a remarkably courageous and resolute nation, to have been able to withstand the subjugating arms of so potent a foe. Now, the present race of mountaineers, who inhabit those same heights of the Lebanon, are characterised by similar qualities of undaunted bravery and stubborn determination ; and as, of old, the Hivites resisted the Israelites effectually, whereas surrounding nations fell completely under their victorious swords, so have the present race of Druses sustained an indomitable resistance against the yoke which the Turkish government has succeeded in fully imposing upon all other classes inhabiting districts within the range of the Ottoman sway. The Druses substantially hold their own to the present hour, and the Turks cannot be said to have ever entirely subdued their rude independence.

It was not without a special object that the ancient Hivites were permitted to dwell in the Lebanon unscathed by the Israelites. If they were thus made a signal exception to that general practice by which the Israelites, on entering upon their new possessions, did not desist until they had scattered and rooted out all the infidels whom they encountered—if the Hivites were allowed to remain undispersed in their mountain

homes in the land of Canaan—it was, as we are explicitly told in the words of the Bible, in order "to prove Israel by them." They became a peculiar instrument of Providence in bringing about the chastisement and humiliation of the children of Israel.

The Angel of the Lord had announced that the Hivites of the Lebanon would be as thorns in the sides of the Israelites—and they were so. It is a strange coincidence that, in like manner, have the Druses proved themselves as thorns in the sides of the Ottoman government. They have not only resisted and overcome the various attempts made at different times to trample down their national freedom; but, professing a creed entirely foreign to that of the Ottoman empire, they have also stood as a permanent and effectual barrier against the spread of Islamism upon their mountains.

All the intermittent forays, expeditions, and invasions undertaken from time to time against the Druses by the Turkish troops, have been made in vain; they have produced no durable results; their effects have been never more than temporary and transient; and wonderful is the recuperative energy of the Druse mountaineers. Nor was the best of Egyptian generals, Ibrahim Pasha, more successful in his attempts to subdue the Druses, during his famous Syrian campaigns. With all the *prestige* of his great success and powerful name—with all his daring and skill, and the formidable numbers of trained Egyptian soldiery under

his command—he was unable to reduce the Druse mountains to subjection. The proud spirit of too bold a people opposed his every effort. Deeply imbued with the heroic traditions of their ancestors, and loving their freedom as they loved the breeze of their mountains, the Druses met all his assaults with noble courage; they clung to their native heights with the most desperate tenacity; and even when, temporarily overpowered, they seemed to bend before the greater strength brought to bear upon them, the fire of their resistance only smouldered, to burst forth again with renewed ardour on the first opportunity.

Notwithstanding Ibrahim Pasha's conquests of every part of Syria, it is notorious that the Druses, although overcome for a limited time, remained, nevertheless, virtually unvanquished. They never endured the thraldom which the son of Mohamed Ali so fiercely imposed upon neighbouring races. Indeed, that dreaded Egyptian prince gave proof of more diplomatic expediency and pliability of temper, in their regard, than was his custom to exhibit towards others; for he showed an unusual readiness to adapt himself, as much as possible, to the peculiarities of the mountain chieftains. In short, Ibrahim Pasha never was in a position to declare himself conqueror of the Druse tribes.

A remarkable incident, however, in which the Druses were concerned, occurred at the time of his evacuation of Syria; and it will always remain to the indelible

discredit of a man who, in other respects, was a brave soldier. The circumstance which I am about to mention evinced on the part of Ibrahim Pasha an unscrupulous, cruel, and pitiless disposition. At the period when Sir Charles Napier was in possession of the seaport towns of Beyrout and Sidon, he communicated with the Druse chief—at that time the Christian Emir Bischir—and demanded the help of the mountain tribes to aid the British arms against the Egyptian usurper. This summons of Sir Charles Napier came to the knowledge of Ibrahim Pasha, and he instantly sent a short, fierce message to the Emir, and to all the chiefs connected with the Lebanon, declaring that if one single man amongst them should make the slightest attempt to aid the English in resistance of Egyptian authority, such a step would be tantamount to signing the death-warrant of every Druse in his power, for all of them should be immediately put to death. Now, at that very moment, the sons and nephews of the Emir Bischir himself were actually serving under the Egyptian general, and were, of course, at his mercy.

Cruel, indeed, was the dilemma of the unhappy Emir between the imperative demand of Sir Charles Napier on the one hand, and, on the other, the savage menace of Ibrahim Pasha ; and it is not surprising that he was checked in his natural impulse to throw himself heart and soul into the contest on the English side, by the tender and irresistible influence of parental love. The mental distress which the poor Emir must have suffered

on this occasion was speedily followed by more material afflictions: it is a noteworthy circumstance that, owing to his unwillingness to co-operate with the British commander, that unfortunate chief sacrified his position in the mountains, was deprived of his dignities, driven from his home, and obliged eventually to seek a refuge at Malta.

It is only in referring to private incidents and private individuals, that we are brought back to the theory upon which we started, because as these Druses have eventually displayed themselves a perfect thorn in the side of the present Ottoman government, so undoubtedly were the Hivites of the time of the Israelites. It is an impudent theory, one which will admit of no support, to presume that the present Druses are really and *de facto* descended from those ancient people inhabiting a like country; still there is a remarkable feature about prophecy, an unmistakeable effulgence which shows not only the determination of the Almighty, but also reveals the exactness and precision with which every act is performed.

It is no extraordinary incident to see God's hand not only pointing, but pressing upon certain countries and certain people in so fearful a manner that the greatest sceptic is obliged to admit that such things are beyond the ordinary sway of mankind. Who can controvert, who dare to dispute that there is a curse, and that a fearful one, imposed about the countries in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem? Who that has travelled as

I have travelled can but silently admit that even the very atmosphere is contaminated? There is the breath of a curse upon the wind—there is the shadow of a curse under every unfoliaged stream—there is the aspect of a curse in the open, barren, heat-ridden mountain—there is the echo of a curse in every silent breeze that stirs those leafless boughs in that most desolate country which surrounds Jerusalem; and yet the daughter of Zion was once famed as a fruitful and a happy land!

Alas! who that now looks upon her desolation, excepting a Christian, could ever dream it possible that that terrible arid country was once a perfect garden; and yet if such can be the indispensable will of the Creator, why is it not possible that these very people, the Druses, who are permitted to bask in the same sunshine, who are permitted to enjoy the same health and strength, I say, why is it not possible that these men should be set as a landmark to reiterate the spread of infamy, to check the spread of so-called religion, to illustrate that terrrible fact that man without the true knowledge of God is better than that man who disgraces God's own acts by aping mercy and illustrating in his own foul mind every evil passion.

I may speak harshly, and yet I appeal to that great monitor of the human race,—I appeal to the conscience,—that these men, ignorant as they will appear when we enter into their creed,—foolish as many of their

symbols may be,—absurd as many of their doctrines —in their private lives may defy the most devout nation to produce a sample equal to them. It may be a far-fetched idea, it may be that I am travelling out of the locality of what some call common sense, but still it is a startling question, and yet not the less true, from its effect, and that question is this, why should God leave a people so strange as the Druses amidst others so-called educated, if it was not that their very follies should mark out a theory for the wiser to work upon as a theme ?

A Druse may be an infidel, but the Christian is a worse one. We possess the secret; we possess the sample of godliness; we have the doctrine of such a man's life as Christ developed, and yet there is not one in ten thousand who can follow it to perfection. The Druses have nothing but their own wild theory, but they are honest and earnest in what they believe; and depend upon it they are a beacon left by the Almighty to indicate to those who shamelessly profess a creed more righteous, that there is nothing more beautiful than human nature, when untainted by the vices of doctrinal discipline.

It is, therefore, not what I attempt to assert, but it is a supposition, a wide field for investigation, to suppose that these Druses may be descended from the very Hivites to whom I have alluded to. It would be too presumptuous for any man to assert that he knew with any degree of certainty the pedigree of a people so

little known. There is one thing, however, most remarkable; from the days of Solomon freemasonry has remained a secret, and here is a people who, notwithstanding every artifice, have resisted the inquisitive disposition of men. There is only one conclusion, and that is the most appropriate one that sensible men can arrive at. I imagine that this is the real one, and I am induced to believe that those who read the creed will think as I think, that the real intrinsic secret is absurdity,—absurdity wrapt in the grossest folds of superstition, and made marvellously singular by a theory without any basis.

The real facts of the case are, that the Druse creed, possessing items of every acknowledged religion, is in itself a marvellous fable, evidently collected from every existing creed, and yet so badly arranged that it contains in itself no plausible theory, and nothing that will admit of investigation. All our greatest prophets, the people that Mohametans most believe in, many of the incidents which constitute the creed of the Hindoo, the absurd Indian notion, and that Chinese theory that the soul is transmigratory; these have been glossed over, and so superstitiously worked up, that the very fact of the ignorance with which they are glossed, lends a charm to the theory; and the people wish little to investigate a dogma apparently dreadful yet possessed of intrinsic charms, and they tamely submit to the supposed superior knowledge of their Akals,—men, in reality, possessed of but little knowledge, and who might

meet with a parallel in the professors of a faith in many lands claiming to greater civilisation than the Lebanon.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE PRESENT EMIR OF THE DRUSES — HIS SEAT OF JUDGMENT — SYSTEM OF TAXATION—PERSONS EXEMPT FROM TAXATION—THE ORDER OF AKAL—NECESSARY FORBEARANCE—PERIOD OF PROBATION—THE KHALOUES, PLACES OF WORSHIP—FUNERAL OF AN AKAL—A NATIVE-BORN DOCTOR—MEDICAL PRACTICE—CURE FOR A FAINTING FIT—HUNTING THE SCORPION—VENERATION FOR LARKS—CONCLUSION.

> Ye frigid tribe, on whom I wasted long
> The tedious hours;— . . .
> Ye first seducers of my easy heart,
> . . . . . .
> . . . . . .
> Most potent, grave, and reverend friends—farewell!
>
> CRABBE.

THE present Grand Emir of the Druses on the Lebanon, is the Emir Ameen, of Shouaifat, a person whom it is impossible to contemplate without feelings of the liveliest interest. In his outward demeanour, and in his observance of religious ceremonies, he may be said to profess his adherence to the tenets of the Mohametan creed, yet is he more than suspected of holding the followers of that faith in secret contempt. And here, if time allowed us, we might indulge in many a speculation as to the effect which the Mohametan religion, as a religion, has upon the minds of the people

at large. But this much I think we may say; that we ought to be tardy to despise a people who have been able, in the moment of danger, to produce the warriors of Citate, Oltenitza, and Silistria, whether the green banner be only the symbol of fanaticism, or of a spirit similar to that which animated the Waldenses and the Pilgrim Fathers.

The name of the Grand Emir Ameen is regarded with the highest reverence by the whole body of the Druses in the Lebanon; and while he exercises supreme and unquestioned authority, he is fortunate enough to enjoy the esteem and good-will of all those who are subject to his rule. The independent spirit of these people delights in showing honour to their noble ruler. No base fear chills the warmth of their ardour, or overawes the ready manifestation of their feelings, but they gladly pay the willing homage of free hearts to one whom they regard as worthy to be the leader of the free.

This spirit of veneration and attachment, which is so seldom found to animate the breast or exercise any considerable effect on the conduct of the inferior in his relations with his superior, is, no doubt, one of the most powerful causes in bringing about that union among the Druses which is justly called strength, and in producing that wonderful moral influence which they unquestionably exercise over the rest of the population in the Lebanon. It is a spirit which has generally been supposed to be peculiar to the inhabitants of mountainous regions; but if it is to be found among

the hill-clans of Scotland, it does not the less manifest itself among the wild roamers of the American prairie. But whether this spirit of attachment to the chieftain be a plant which finds a more congenial soil on the mountain than the plain, this is certain—that nowhere is it of stronger growth or more prolific in its fruits than among the Druse tribes of the Lebanon.

Like the princes of old, the Grand Emir occupies the seat of judgment, it being his duty to pronounce sentence in criminal cases, to decide civil causes, and settle and adjust all quarrels and differences among his people—a duty the exercise of which, in some countries more favored by so-called civilisation, would leave him little time for any other occupation. But among a people so simple in their habits and moral in their lives, crime must be comparatively of rare occurrence, and the causes of dissension cannot be very numerous or complicated. However, trials do sometimes take place; and upon these occasions the Grand Emir attends personally in his tribunal, which is situated at Shouaifat; for that may be said to be the centre of judicial authority and power.

Notwithstanding the supreme influence of the Grand Emir, all the secondary emirs or sheiks, who are the constituted rulers of the villages which are under his sway, exercise a wonderful independence, and often adjudicate upon cases and condemn criminals without any reference to him. As it was in the earliest ages of recorded time, so it is now: the same patriarchal

form of government—the same little knots of families, whose head is their ruler and judge in peace, and their chieftain in the hour of battle. Thousands of years, that have seen empires rise and decay, serve but to mark the unchangeableness of this wild people. All nations of all times have passed over its territories—all religions have had their origin there; and at this moment, on this little mountain range, whose population is scarse and whose soil is uncultivated, are to be found living representatives of all religions and all countries. All are there; and among them all, but still apart, is the Druse tribe—perhaps the representative of the old Gentile world; and when we see their emirs and sheiks sitting in the judgment-seat, we are reminded of our Saviour's words, "Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and their great ones exercise authority upon them."

One of the principal duties of these secondary sheiks is the collection of taxes, upon which they are allowed a per-centage; after deducting which, the remainder has to be remitted to the Grand Emir. The amount of this tax differs according to the means of the peasant, and its payment is seldom, if it is ever necessary to exact it, enforced, as the peasant, being generally honest by nature and habit, and having few if any inducements to avarice, comes forward at the appointed time, and with good heart and will pays his proportionate share of taxation.

Here is no national debt—no feverish excitement about the national imports, no dread of the tax-gatherer's unwelcome knock! Law has not here superseded justice; and if a man cannot pay, he need not fear the unyielding rigour of men grown hard in the repeated infliction of authorized suffering—who do not scruple to take the bed from under the penniless defaulter, careless what becomes of his houseless family, so long as the king's or the queen's taxes be satisfied. So paternally is the power of collecting this tax exercised among the Druses, that the people are proud to give—they would consider it a mark of meanness to avoid payment, and will often be seen to vie with one another in liberality, pressing forward eagerly to give their tribute; for sympathy with their rulers makes them hold it an honor to support them to their uttermost.

The only individuals among them who are not subject to the tax are the Akals, who are in every way allowed the greatest liberty, and who, while free from the slightest restraint, at the same time enjoy the greatest respect. The word Akal, which means sober or quiet, is very properly applied to the people who bear that name; for in reality, the Akals are the more quiet, good, and sober part of the Druse population; their whole lives are devoted to doing good, and they meet several times in the week, in their Khaloues, or sacred edifices, where they discuss their creed, and give each other good advice.

It may give the reader some idea of the extravagant length to which the Akals carry their notions of purity and goodness, to state that they never accept of food which may be casually offered to them; neither will they take money under any circumstances, lest either should have been procured by dishonesty, fraud, or violence.

The class of Akals is not necessarily restricted to the male part of the population: women are often admitted, provided they are of a certain age, and are prepared to subject themselves to the same system of self-denial which characterises the men. The following is the course of proceeding which is adopted when a person is desirous of joining the order. A necessary preliminary is, that the person who is a candidate for the honor of admission into the sacred corps should intimate his intention to an Akal, upon which a special meeting is held. This is a very solemn affair, and the ordeal one of the strictest imaginable. An inquiry takes place into the general character and conduct of the aspirant; his whole life is passed in review; his habits criticised, and everything that is known respecting him fully discussed.

Supposing him not to have been guilty of any crime, and to be well recommended, the next step is that he should be made acquainted with the requisitions of the Druse religion, which are then clearly set before him; and he is informed that to be worthy of becoming an Akal, he must forthwith abandon every vice, and relinquish all the idle habits he may hitherto have

indulged in. He must not smoke, or drink wine or spirits; neither must he take snuff; he must be content to wear the plainest apparel (this is perhaps aimed at the fairer portion of Akal society); and, in short, laying aside every thought of splendour and luxury, must only consider how he can best show, in his demeanour and life, a firm devotion to the simple habits and sacred principles of the order of which he now desires to become an adopted member.

But this is not enough: the capability to lead a holy life is not always equal to the desire. A temporary excitement of religious tendencies, a more than ordinary warmth of imagination, a sudden calamity, may for a time awaken the stings of conscience, and affect the tenderest sensibilities of the heart; but the good impressions too often yield before the force of temptation, and the dormant energies which have been aroused for the moment sink back into their wonted lethargy; or a zeal untempered by knowledge proves that we have undertaken a burden too heavy for us to bear, and that we had better not have put our hand to the plough if we cannot forbear to look back.

The wise Akals, therefore, are not satisfied with the best of promises. They require a little proof, and to this end they allow the candidate for admission into their ranks a certain fixed period, varying in duration according to the man's previous life, before the lapse of which he is expected to have made up his mind finally as to his capability of conforming faithfully, for the

rest of his life to the tenets of so strict and severe a profession. During this period of probation all his actions and pursuits are closely watched and scrupulously noted; and should he, at the end of this allotted time, still evince a desire to become an Akal, he is then admitted into the khaloue, and suffered to attend some of their religious meetings and listen to an exposition of their creed and doctrines. Twelve months are now devoted to his religious education, at the end of which time he is considered to be sufficiently tried and instructed to assume the title of Akal. Then the ceremony of donning the white turban takes place, for by this white turban the Akals are recognised; and he is thereupon admitted into all the mysteries of the faith, and becomes one of the initiated brethren.

Although almost all of what are commonly called the pleasures of life are denied to these holy men, yet celibacy is not enjoined upon the sect. An Akal may marry, if he pleases; but it is not often that he does so, especially among the Druses. The Akals of that tribe are, generally speaking, desirous to detach themselves as much as possible from the ordinary pursuits of mankind; they lead a life of the strictest devotion, passed in prayer and profound contemplation of the mysteries of religion, and are held in the highest respect and esteem for their amiable manners and virtuous lives by the whole of the people.

They exercise, too, a very considerable influence in temporal matters, for nobody would think of entering

upon any place, or conducting an affair without consulting the Akals; nothing of importance would be attempted, even by a sheik, without their advice and approval; and altogether they exercise a general controul and supervision over the manners, morals, and proceedings of the Druse people, which has a most beneficial effect, for certainly, as the Akals are the best of the Druses, so the Druses are the best of the inhabitants of the Lebanon.

The Akals are more especially regarded as the ministers of peace; their very presence banishes discord, and whenever a Druse peasant meets an Akal he salutes him as one who is the harbinger of peace and happiness, and kisses his hand with reverence and affection.

The Akals are very jealous of their khaloues, and no European, or stranger, is suffered to enter them during the hour of prayer; but at any other time, they may be entered by any sect upon obtaining permission of an Akal, although there is little to reward curiosity in the khaloues, for they are very plain buildings. The walls of some of them are ornamented with figures of different colors, and a rush mat and basin of running water are always to be found in them ; the battle flags of the tribe are also laid up there.

As the Akals are so highly reverenced during their life, all honour is paid to them when death summons them to another world. Upon the occasion of an Akal's funeral the whole village turns out and accom-

panies the body to the grave, and the last rites are performed with greater honours than are usually paid even at the funeral of a sheik. Sums of money, pieces of cloth, and numerous presents are often given by the villagers to be deposited in the grave or vault of the deceased Akal, and all the virtues and good actions which have distinguished him in life are described on his tomb with affectionate fidelity.

This institution of Akals is a very pleasing feature in the customs of the people, and an undoubted evidence of the sterling worth of their character. It must have a most favourable effect in maintaining that sympathy between all classes, the absence of which is often to be so much deplored in countries that boast of the favours of civilisation, where the bitterness which marks the war of class interests would perhaps be somewhat assuaged, if there were a few Akals moving about, with the words of peace and good-will on their lips, teaching masters and men that after all they are brethren.

The Druses are not a people who can lay claim to any very extensive acquaintance with the art of healing. In this respect they must be considered behind the age. Their methods of cure are of the most simple description, and there are no medicines to be found among them but such as are in common use among all native-born Syrians. In surgery, however, they are by no means incapable practitioners, and their performances in this respect have often elicited the wonder and

admiration of those who prided themselves upon superior education and more extensive experience.

A story is related in Beyrout which, however much it may excite surprise or incredulity, is nevertheless perfectly true. In 1837, when the great earthquake shook Sidon, the wife of the French Consular Agent there received some very dangerous fractures. All the European doctors in Beyrout and Sidon were called in, and all pronounced that immediate amputation was necessary. The lady, however, refused to undergo the process of amputation; and perhaps having had too much experience of European doctors to think them infallible, determined to consign herself to the care of a native-born doctor.

This man was renowned for having in his possession medicinal herbs of a most wonderful virtue, which were said to have effected astonishing cures; and when he was summoned to the lady's bedside, he rejected all thoughts of the use of the knife, and merely commenced plastering the injured limbs with his potent herbs; and all through the illness of his patient, he never resorted to anything else but his medicinal herbs and outward applications. In the space of two months after the lady was consigned to the care of this celebrated *hakeem*, she was so far recovered as to be able to leave her room and walk about without support, and it was not long before the limbs regained their wonted strength and a perfect cure was effected.

This may be called a happy accident; but certain

it is, that in all rude countries the most favourable results are often produced by the use of herbs and simples. It may be that in warmer climates the blood is more easily worked upon, and is less obstructed by the injurious influences which the ways and habits of a more artificial state of society are constantly producing on the general system: but, however it may be, philosophy would do well not to despise effects merely because they are brought about by means simple in their nature and of easy access.

The art of bleeding in the arm is very common among the Druses, and indeed among all the natives of Syria: whilst in the act of bleeding a person they invariably place before him a plate or bag full of coins, which they request him to count, the action of moving the fingers being considered to facilitate the operation and promote the free circulation of the blood.

While upon the subject of medical practice among the Druses, I may mention the ordinary remedies resorted to in the case of a sore throat and fainting fit. The process of cure adopted in the former case is simple enough, but, as I can state from experience, very effectual. A small quantity of oil is heated, and then the operator dips his fingers in the oil and rubs the neck of the patient, but with such force that it requires some strength to bear it; afterwards a piece of coarse woollen cloth is heated and bound round the neck, and the patient is sent off to bed, to rise next morning perfectly cured of his sore throat.

In the case of a fainting fit, the method used to recall suspended animation and bring the person to his senses again, is as amusing as it is extraordinary. Supposing the reader to have fainted away in the house of a Druse, a hunt immediately takes place for all the keys in the establishment, or other articles of steel or iron of a similar nature, which are speedily collected together for the benefit of the patient, and are duly distributed over different parts of his body. Some are placed on his naked breast, one on each hand, one on each foot, and one is held against his forehead. These are supposed to recover the person from his fainting fit and recall his scattered senses ; and, indeed, whether it be the effect of the cold steel or not, I have witnessed this process, and in the course of a few minutes the person has recovered from his swoon, after having been thus overwhelmed with keys.

I have heard of a lady who once walked into a chemist's shop, and said she was going to faint, and who was told by the accommodating, but not over-polite attendant behind the counter, that she was at perfect liberty to do so. "What!" she exclaimed, starting up, "do you think I am going to faint in the shop?" Perhaps the lady had resided at some period of her life among the Druses, and had before her eyes the potent infliction of the keys; in which case, I think she was perfectly justified in postponing her fainting fit till she reached some more retired spot than the shop for the purpose of enduring the edifying process. The Druses

are not free from superstition; amulets and signet rings are common among them, and supposed to possess a talismanic power.

The lark and the serpent are held in great reverence by them; and not only the Druses, but the inhabitants of Syria in general pretend that if a person kills or hunts a serpent, the injured reptile will breathe upon him, and the scent of the serpent's breath will remain upon him till an opportunity is afforded to a brother serpent to revenge himself for the maltreatment of his fellow.

Scorpions, however, enjoy no such respect; they are hunted both by Druses and Beyrouteens. Some parts of the sands which lie to the south-east of Beyrout are infected by scorpions, especially the more distant part of the road which leads to the sands from the Ras Beyrout gate. Just before coming to these sands small holes may be seen at the bottom of the hedges which run on either side of the road; these holes are the habitations of the scorpions, and the following is the mode in which these venomous reptiles are hunted by the natives.

In the hedges and fields grow an immense number of red poppies; plucking one of these, we divest the flower of its leaves and retain the stem with the small round lump which contains the seeds. We take this stem, and fixing upon a scorpion hole, we drive the stem, the lump foremost, into the hole, and then wait for the scorpion to bite; immediately it does so its claws stick

to the lump, and it cannot disentangle itself; we then draw the stem out with the scorpion hanging on it. A thin stick with a small piece of bees' wax at the end will answer the same purpose as the poppy.

The veneration of the Druses for larks is also, as I have said, to be remarked; it is considered a sin for any one to shoot at those aerial songsters, and sooner or later, it is believed, condign punishment will attend the criminal act.

And now, gentle reader, I have accomplished my task; but at such a moment as the present, I cannot hastily say farewell; for there are thoughts which linger in the mind that has dwelt on the subject of my theme, of too great interest to be summarily dismissed; thoughts, too, some of which represent the present hopes and fears of thousands, and which are equally shared by the rude dwellers in lowly cottages, and by the wealthy occupants of lordly halls; for who can quit the land I have attempted to describe without being carried to the theatre where is being enacted that terrible struggle upon which so much depends.

"The East" is once again a "Household word," stirring the heart's blood of peer and peasant, and once again upon its sunny shores "war sits horror-plumed;" but the tide of time has swept away all the old landmarks. No English Cœur de Lion now wields the sword against a Turkish Saladin; but side by side with the Moslem foe of yore, marches the flower of English youth, to drive back the unjust and barbaric

attacks of a people who were but lately our allies, from a land which we were once wont to deem it our highest calling to invade and destroy.

And now, as though time, with harlequin touch, were determined to try his most wondrous changes, now, amid those once hostile banners, floats in friendly unison, the battle flag of that gallant nation which we have hitherto been taught to regard as our most intrepid foe, or our most formidable rival: but "old times are changed, old manners gone." England and France have shaken hands, and from such an union we may augur the best success for the cause of order of civilisation. The war is unavoidable, because forced upon us, and its object is not conquest, but the establishment of a permanent peace, the benefits of which will affect the East not less than the West, and will be too wide-spread not to include the territories with whose people and scenery I have endeavoured to make the reader acquainted.

Doubtless a new era is about to dawn upon these mountains. The West has borrowed from the East all that is beautiful in art and science and philosophy; and let us hope that she is now about to repay some part of her great debt. Let civilisation reform the abuses, and overthrow the corruption of the Hill-Government. Let education be introduced among the people; let superstition be gradually rooted out—not encouraged for sinister ends. Let the unhappy civil wars which so constantly rage between Druse

and Maronite be for ever extinguished, and peace and happiness will assert their triumphant reign on these mountain heights; the wealth and internal resources of the country will be developed; hidden treasures in botany, natural history, geology, mineralogy will be brought to light, and the land of the patriarchs will revive once more.

It cannot be the final destiny of this wondrous land, the abode of the God-taught seers and kings, to remain enveloped in the dark cloud of a false faith. Error and superstition cannot long maintain their altars on the mountain heights which have been brushed by angel-feet—where the voice of the Deity has proclaimed his will to the people of the old world, and where the living God has moved, teaching the new law of peace and love. Slowly behind the deserts of Arabia must sink the last sun of Islamism; and over the summits of the snow-capped tops of Lebanon will rise with all its brightness the morning star of Christianity.

RELIGIOUS CODE OF THE DRUSES TRANSLATED.

Chapter 1.

A SHORT EXPLANATION OF THE OCEAN OF TIME.

The Creator, the supreme, created all things.

The first thing He created was the minister "Universal Mind" (العقل الكلي) the praises of God be upon him! and the Creator gave to "Mind" the power to create, classify, and arrange all things.

The Spirit "Mind" has the following attributes—"The Virgin of Power," (بكر القدرة) "The Receiver of Revelation," (قابل الوحي) "The knower of the Wishes, *or Desires*," (عالم المراد) "The explainer of commands," (مفيض الامر) "The Spring of Light," (بدعت النور) "The Will of Production," (ارادة المبدع) "The Chosen of the Creator," (صفي الباري) and so forth.

It was this spirit, "Mind," known by the above attributes, that arranged the world.

The "Mind is the Pen which writes upon stone, and the stone which it writes upon is "The Soul."

The "Mind" is a perfect being, which being is at liberty to act, and is possessed of a free will; all he ordains or creates is in accordance with the will of the Creator.

When the Creator created "Mind," He made him possessed of a free will, and with power to separate, or to remain and dwell with the Creator.

Ultimately "Mind" rebelled and abandoned the Creator, and thus became the spirit of sin, which sin was predestined to create the devil.

And the existence or creation of the devil occasioned the creation of another spirit called "Universal Soul," (النفس الكليه) and this spirit was the cause of the creation of all things existing.

The devil is perfect sin, and the creation of this spirit was permitted by the Creator, to show the unlimited power of the Creator in creating an opposite spirit to God.

Now when "Mind" rebelled against the Creator, the Creator threw him out of heaven; but "Mind" knew that this was done by the Creator to test his faith, and to punish him for his sin; so he repented and asked for forgiveness, and implored help against the devil.

And the Creator pitied "Mind," and created him a helpmate called "Universal Soul;" this spirit God created from the spirits of the knowledge of good and evil.

Then "Mind" told "Soul" to yield obedience to the Creator, and "Soul" yielded, and became a helpmate of "Mind;" and these two spirits tried to force into submission to the Creator the evil spirit or devil.

They came to the evil one, "Mind" from behind, and "Soul" from before, in this fashion to marshal the devil into the presence of the Creator; but the devil evaded them, being unguarded on either side, which enabled him to escape from them to the right and left.

The "Mind" and "Soul," finding this to be the case, required each of them a helpmate: "Mind" required a helpmate to keep the evil one from the right side, "Soul"

one to guard him on the left, so as to hem in the devil between them, and prevent his escape on any side.

So they moved and immediately two spirits were created; the one called "Word," (الكلمة) and the other "the Preceding," (السابق).

The devil now found himself hemmed in on all four sides, and felt the want of a spirit to help him; and as to all things there must be an opposite, the Creator knowing the thoughts of the devil, inspired "Mind," and thus created him a supporter (اساس); and when this supporter was created it was against the wishes of "Soul."

The "Mind" and "Soul" commanded this supporter to yield to the Creator, and he yielded and worshipped the Creator.

And the Creator commanded the supporter to yield to "Mind" and "Soul;" but being instigated by the devil and tempted to disobedience, this supporter refused submission to "Mind" and "Soul;" whereupon, being cast out of heaven, he clung to the devil.

Then the Creator inspired "Mind," and "Mind" inspired "Soul," and created the Word (as already said).

And the Word could do good or evil.

And the Mind and Soul told "Word" to yield to the Creator, and the Word yielded; and the four spirits, "Mind," "Devil," "Soul," and the supporter, having inspired "Word," created "Preceding," who had good and evil in him, but more of the former than the latter; so that "Preceding" yielded ready obedience to the Creator, and was also subservient to "Mind" and "Soul."

Now all these spirits above enumerated inspired "Preceding," and thus created "Ultimum," the last spirit created, and he yielded to the Creator.

And the Creator commanded "Ultimum" to be sub-

servient to "Mind," "Soul," "Word," and "Preceding;" and "Ultimum" was subservient.

Now all these spirits were true spirits before they entered the modern world, and their generation is as follows: the Creator created "Mind," and "Mind" created "Soul," and "Soul" created "Word," and "Word" created "Preceding," and "Preceding" created "Ultimum," and "Ultimum" created the heavens and the earth and all therein.

And it came to pass that the aforesaid five spirits came to the devil, "Mind" from behind, "Soul" from before, "Word" from the left, and "Preceding" and "Ultimum" from the right, in order to force him to yield submission to the Creator; but the devil refused submission, and finding himself confined on all sides, with no means of issue except upwards and downwards, and as, moreover, he feared fleeing upwards, where he must needs encounter the Creator, the devil fled downwards, *or sunk into the earth;* and this was the origin of hell.

Chapter 2.

When the world was created it was at the will of the Creator who called it "The world of Souls," and these souls are masculine or feminine.

All the Spirits created were created from, *or out,* of "Mind."

The origin, *or root,* of these spirits is the Creator: next to him ranks "Mind," then "Soul, and so on in regular succession, as they were created, down to "Ultimum."

The souls that have been created in the world, *that is Mankind,* were numbered from the beginning, and have

never diminished or increased, and will remain so for all eternity.

Each soul is perfect in itself, possessing all the senses, such as hearing, seeing, feeling, tasting, smelling, and touching, and possessing all the attributes and senses which originated by the regular successive creation of the first seven spirits; and each spirit created possessed, in addition to its own peculiar gifts, the capacity and senses of the others.

All the souls that were created in the world possessed the knowledge of all things except of their Creator, for which cause the Creator placed them in separate bodies (*earthly tabernacles*), and by this means they obtained knowledge of their Creator.

All the stars, suns, moons, which are in *sight of* the earth were created for the use and good of these souls.

The bodies, *or encasements*, of these souls are all corruptible, but the souls themselves are incorruptible and unchangeable, shifting from one man or beast to another, and never differing from what they were and continue to be.

Chapter 3.

Whatever exists that is in possession of the senses of hearing, seeing, feeling, was created from *or made out of* the seven original spirits, and gained by them the additional sensation of heat and cold.

Heat was masculine; Cold, feminine; and by the marriage of these two was produced Solidity, (البيوست). Again, they produced a second offspring called Mildness, (الرطوبت).

When these four were created, then the world, Chaos, received a body and the Image.

By Image, is signified length, breadth, height, and depth.

This Chaos is round; and the further star, called Atlas, was created by him.

Then Chaos came to the orbits of the constellation, and immediately were created the twelve signs of the Zodiac: some fixed, others in perpetual motion.

Then Chaos created Zahil, and from thence, from one orbit to the other till the seven planets were made; and none of them travel on the same orbit, but each has a different orbit.

All this was done by Chaos—by the help of the seven original spirits, who in their turn derived aid from the Creator.

The names and the order of the orbits that are furthest from the sun are as follows—1. Huilah, (الهيولي) 2. Atlas, (الاطلس) 3. Abrage, 4. Zahil, (زحلـ) and so on, to the last orbit nearest the sun.

The names of the seven planets are Zahil, (زحلـ) Mushtari, (مشتهري) Marrih, (مريخ) Shams, (شمس) Zahrat, (زهرة) Aatarid (عطارد) and Kamar, (قمر).

These seven arranged the interior economy of the Earth, and all that happens to the animal or vegetable and mineral creation is through the agency of these seven stars, *or planets:* fortune and misfortune are ruled by them.

All the aforesaid planets combined, *or moved,* and heat fell downwards to a medium spot, and there forming a mass, constituted fire. Further downwards the air was gathered together and became the medium, *or concentrated* spot for Atmosphere.

And from the dampness exuding hence, Water was

created. This water was made half a circle (not being a circle), and from the water again was created a half circle of land.

The light particles of heat ascending upwards towards the moon caused the existence of winds; and what remained of the original mass of heat occupied the spot where it fell.

The light particles of heat that remained became fire,—and the light particles of water became breezes, *or zephyrs*.

The rest became earth.

The light particles of earth became dust, sand, stones, etc.; and the remainder rocks, mines, minerals.

Chapter 4.

The Creator having made man, made him perfect, more so than the beast.

When the Creator determined upon creating man, He created the first man and woman; and after them, procreation was to take place and mankind was to be born from the woman.

The bodies of the first man and woman were like unto houses without inmates, which required to be inhabited, and about which, when once inhabited, peace would reign.

All the virtues that "Mind" possessed were given to the human body, and from the time that "Mind" entered into the body nothing more was created; everything having been already provided against the wants of man and beast.

The souls which were placed in the bodies had each, before being thus confined, the privilege granted

them by the Creator of speaking, feeling, and possessing and enjoying all the senses.

Only they were ignorant of the truth of the origin of their existence; nor were they acquainted with the Creator.

They did not seek God by their works, nor did they in their ignorance consider *or reflect* on their end and future punishment.

It was therefore necessary that there should be specific *or peculiar* orders among them.

And the Almighty Creator had compassion *on the people* and granted them those specific orders.

And those specific orders are the borders, *or order,* of Truth (حروف الصدق) and the order of Falsehood, (حروف الكزب).

The right direction, *or path,* emanates from the order of Truth; but there is no true direction, *or path,* in the order of Falsehood, which is also the confines of error and corruption.

The order of Truth began to enlighten the people and teach them to follow the truth and know and acknowledge their Creator; and souls were turned to the knowledge of God, and they were persuaded of His existence by His Creatures.

Then again the Creator had mercy *upon His people,* and manifested to them an entire separation, in which separation there is no priesthood.

And the Creator showed himself to them in his name and by his works and mercy, and he granted them miraculous revelations which proved his greatness and pointed out, *or testified,* to his Unity, by instilling in their hearts such exclamations as, God is Great! There is no God but God! God be praised! In the name of God the clement and merciful! and so forth.

His manifestation, *or appearance,* was of the highest of high importance, for he called them unto him by invitation, and spoke to them, saying "Am I not your God?"

And all the people believed in the Unity of the Most High, hence they had no excuse *for sin.*

It was necessary that they should regard God as superior to them all, wherefore repentance and punishment were established.

It was the wisest Mind (may God have mercy upon him!) that was standing with God in the place of the Priesthood, inviting the people to the knowledge of their Creator, the Most High, and of his Unity.

"Mind" manifested *to the people,* the arts and sciences, and God Almighty aided Mind with his Holy assistance, and gave him knowledge, and directions, and other requisites; and He appointed to "Mind" spiritual powers, and gave him the titles of Priest, (ايمه) Prophet, (الرسول) Director, (المليكه) Adviser, (الانيا) and the like attributes and appellations.

He appointed to him also such manifest signs as the Sun, the stars, the mountains, the heaven, the earth, and the narrow path leading to heaven, (الرباح).

The order of Truth exists in perfect men who teach the people to distinguish between what is lawful and what is unlawful, and who caution them against sin and crimes, and instruct them in sciences and arts.

And the benediction of God Almighty was promulgated over the earth, and no man remained to whom the blessing did not extend; therefore was there no excuse *for man to rebel.*

Chapter 5.

God Almighty saw the existence of the highest of the High in the image of humanity for a long period, and he is the origin, *or cause*, of the motion of the world and the establishment of all the worlds that are turning round it.

And in the course of time, it was necessary that the people who were in simplicity should be made perfect in their intentions, and that they should be able to distinguish the obedient from the rebellious, the constant from the inconstant, the just from the unjust.

The Exalted did not disappear until the people were divided into two divisions; one division to the assembly, the other to perdition.

The division of the righteous people was predestined from that very beginning to happiness and good.

The division of those who are born to perdition was predestined to disobedience from the beginning to the very last day.

And the Almighty manifestation was repeated and reiterated at different epochs, and He had much patience in order that his works might be completed, that the people might have time for repentance, and that the decrees of God might be established and punishments appointed.

When God Almighty disappeared, his setting star, which is the Perfect "Mind," (may God bless him!) also disappeared and left behind him the perfect "Soul," and my lord "Word" was his supporter, (اساس).

Chapter 6.

The existing orders, *or disciples*, of Truth that were in the "Word" invited the people to recognise the Unity

of the Creator, and to aspire to the knowledge of the Creator's setting sun, the perfect "Mind."

And when "Soul" disappeared, he created himself a supporter, who is "Word," and the existing disciples of Truth were in the service of "Soul."

And when "Word" disappeared, there were created after him seven priests from amongst the disciples of Truth, and each priest has a spiritual invitation to the recognition of the Unity of the Great God.

Meanwhile the disciples of justice were looking to the disciples of injustice that this latter *should repent* and unite with the assembly.

The disciples of Truth had a law which they regarded as their faith, and they followed its injunctions.

After some time the seven priests declared that the cursed Ibliss was manifested in the "Pronouncer of invitation," (ناطق التكليف) and in the law of his invitation; moreover, that he established to himself a supporter, and the people of falsehood were with him and with his supporter.

The "Pronouncer of invitation" had twelve decrees, and his supporter had twelve decrees, established for the furtherance of eloquence and falsehood.

The existence of this speaker, *or Pronouncer of invitation,* was, in the days of the confines of Truth, imitating and studying the rules of the law, distinguishing good from evil, and cognizant of all except what was yet to come on the manifestation of the Unity in the millennium at the second coming of Ali Almighty.

Possessing this knowledge, it came to pass that the disciples of Truth were deceived by the law of the "Pronouncer of invitation," which is the despised law as manifested by its works.

This "Pronouncer of invitation" was wont to declare himself a prophet, and one based upon a solid foundation.

He was also wont to rise upon the people with a sword, and with compulsion, in order to force them to embrace his law.

After the death of this eloquent one, his creed was propagated on the confines of Truth in order to explain the meaning of the descent from heaven.

And this eloquent one established, himself, an inward or secret law,—and was possessed of a sufficient knowledge of the true law to base his own creed thereon.

After the passing away of the supporter *of this eloquent one,* the seven priests arose and embraced his law.

And every one of these priests has a long and lengthened duration, and the experience, *or duration,* of each of them is a hundred thousand years.

And the nations of the earth inherited the knowledge of the law of each priest that came forward obeying its injunctions, and appointing doctors, chosen from among themselves, to instruct others in the law of each priest, until the whole seven had passed away.

The whole of the duration of the seven priests extended over seven hundred thousand years.

Then appeared the Creator in uncovering the glory and shame of the Amr and established the all-powerful Ali to reveal his Unity and the extent of his power, to establish prayer, to separate knowledge, to give laws, to establish decrees, and to refer to the promises and the promised.

Then again the Creator appeared in a third manifestation, and all was repeated as in the second.

Meanwhile the renowned law continued to grow more feeble, *or to lose supporters.*

Chapter 7.

And the people of Truth followed the direction of the law, holding fast by the truths, and reposing on the promises of the person promised them, for relief from the oppressions of the laws of each new revolution, until the seventieth revolution should have been completed, which revolution precedes the revolution of the Creator Almighty.

And the Creator established the law for the people in ten things.

First, in their equality in production.

Second, he established the power of materiality.

Third, he exhibited in the people the grace of existence.

Fourth, he granted mediators.

Fifth, he granted the power of choice.

Sixth, he made freedom of action necessary to the people.

Seventh, he widened the prolongation of patience.

Eighth, he established pre-eminence by means of one's best endeavours.

Ninth, he opened the gates of repentance.

And, tenth, he spread before the people the promises of the promised.

When these ten epochs were completed, the existing disciples of truth followed the faith of the Priests of the Creator, and did their best endeavours to bring forward Shutneel, the doctor, (the praises of God be upon him!)

And God Almighty on his manifestation established Shutneel as a priest to the people, and ordered the angels to worship him, and all obeyed, except Hareth, the son of Tirmah; he refused, and was proud.

Chapter 8.

Hareth was serving in the priesthood with all the other angels, and he was among them when the Creator commanded them to be subjected to Shutneel.

And the Angels worshipped Shutneel, but Hareth refused and abandoned Paradise, and, quitting its borders, all the disciples of Falsehood fell with him, and Paradise was rid of their presence.

The Paradise of the Creator extended all over the earth, and the disciples of truth entered therein and received the commands of Shutneel, the doctor.

And they kept apart from those who deny the Unity of God, and turned out the disciples of falsehood from among them.

Then were established the order of Truth, and the words of verity (God's peace be upon them!)

And the priesthood belonged to Shutneel, who is Adam the happy; and Hareth and his followers were jealous and plotted contrivances to deprive him of his paradise, and to establish an enmity between him and his race.

Now these deceivers never desisted from their object: they came and said, "We have a piece of advice to give to you, O our Lord, Enoch; (احنوخ) and to your partner, Sharkh, (شرخ) which is good for you both."

This they kept repeating until they were admitted into the presence of Enoch and of his partner Sharkh.

When they came before them they worshipped them; and Enoch, who is the second Adam, said, "Perhaps you have repented and seek forgiveness for your blasphemy and disobedience to the priesthood in having assisted Ibliss and his associates."

But the deceiver replied, "No, I swear by your head and by the Creator, I have come to give you advice by reason of the interest I take in your welfare, and to warn you against the injustice of Shutneel in having compelled you to be subjected to him."

I have heard our Lord the Creator (praises be to him!) say that the priesthood belonged only to Enoch and Sharkh cailiffs in paradise.

Hereupon Enoch made him swear, and he swore to him.

And as it was the custom that whosoever swore by God falsely should be punished, no one dared to swear by him falsely.

And when the deceiver swore to Enoch and Sharkh that he was sincere in what he said, true in his deeds, and most pure in his words, they believed him, and fell into sin in many ways.

First, by neglecting the commandments of Shutneel.

Secondly, by changing the priesthood from the person to whom it belonged.

Thirdly, by changing the will of the Creator (praises be to him!) and opposing what he commanded them; for the Creator had said, "Do not approach this tree, that ye be not of the unjust."

Fourthly, by believing in the words of one they knew to be deceitful.

And, fifthly, by accepting advice from the father of deceit.

Now after they had committed these sins, and had so far forgotten themselves, Enoch and Sharkh awoke to a sense of what they had done and perceived their baseness.

Knowing that Shutneel was aware of their thoughts, and that they had no other way left them but that of

repentance and of suing for forgiveness, they went to Shutneel.

They went to him crying, repenting of, and confessing their sins, and spoke to the following effect:—

Thou art the forgiver, and we are the transgressors, thou art the pardoner of sins, thou art the merciful, thou art the Creator, thou art the clement, oh! our God, forgive us.

With such like words they sued for mercy.

And when Shutneel knew that Enoch and Sharkh were truly repentant he begged the Creator to forgive them and to restore them to the position, *or grade*, they formerly occupied.

The creatures who committed this sin were five in number, Enoch, Sharkh, Aneel, Tabookh, and Hibal.

And Enoch is "The Soul," Sharkh, is my lord the "Word," Aneel is the plaintiff, and Tabookh, their speaker.

And the deceiver is the supporter of the devil, not Ibliss, and he blasphemed against Shutneel.

Chapter 9.

Some people have been foolish, *or ignorant* enough to imagine that Enoch and Sharkh are the "Prophet" and "Foundation," but this belief is erroneous.

Moreover, such a belief would be the real cause of perdition, for Enoch is the perfect "Soul," and "Sharkh" is my lord "Word" the eternal.

And this is the decree of Adam, the happy.

And the Priest, the truthful, has said, that Adam is

three Adams,—Adam *the first,* and Adam the happy, the entire, and Adam the forgetful, the resolute.

And it is said with regard to Adam the second, in the Koran, that he rebelled against his God: now this man was Enoch.

And Adam the forgetful, who was also called Shait, is Sharkh.

Moreover, it is said that Shutneel chose them from among his people, and that each of them is related to him.

And it is furthermore said, that Adam the second and Adam the third, who is Sharkh, served in the presence of Adam the first *(Shutneel).*

Enoch and Sharkh are the "Soul" and the "Word," and whosoever believeth contrary to this creed, is of the unjust in this world, and in the next world, of those who are lost.

So may God make us and all our brethren disciples of the true faith, and deliver us from doubts after having attained to the truths! Amen.

Chapter 10.

Now when the disciples of truth beheld the paradise of God and the change in the law of the "Gin," they combined together to contradict the existence of Unity.

And this unbelief grew upon them until all respect for the Creator (praises be to him!) had left them.

Whereupon the pure Shutneel passed away and left behind him Enoch, who is the perfect "Soul," and his supporter, Sharkh, who is "Word."

And the disciples of truth that remained, followed the doctrines of Enoch during his presence *upon earth.*

When Enoch disappeared, his supporter, who is my lord, the Word, established the spiritual law and declared the Unity of the Creator (praises be to him!)

And when the Word disappeared, there came after him seven praiseworthy priests from among the disciples of truth, similar to those that came in the time of Shutneel.

On the appearance of each of these priests they severally declared the Unity of the Creator, and the disciples of Truth followed the law of Enoch, receiving in their priesthood only the *Morteddeens* (المرتديين) and no others.

Now these Morteddeens were companions of those in the human race who recognise the Unity of God from the beginning to the day of resurrection, which is the day of judgment.

Chapter 11.

Now, when the term of the law of Adam (*Shutneel*), which term was a thousand years, (a short time in comparison to the term that preceded it, which was the term of the praiseworthy law,) had passed away, the will of God commanded the appearance of the prophets, the invited.

And the Creator was wrath against the people of those days; for they inclined towards the believers in the Trinity, and he took away his grace from them.

Then appeared Noah, the son of Lamech, as a prophet, and he was the first who established the law which invites the people to worship and believe in the unity of an image.

Shem was the supporter of Noah, and he possessed twelve decrees.

And Noah continued in the faith of the people of Truth, who profited by his revelations, and invited them to cognizance of the book Wahi, which taught the difference between good and evil.

After Shem, appeared seven priests, and the disciples of Truth entered into their beliefs; and when the laws which established the greatness of the Creator had been developed, and their sources studied, then the people began to desire a new organisation.

And the faith of Noah extended to all people, because the punishment of the deluge had collected all the people under one head, and moreover, the miracles that had taken place before the appearance of Noah continued to direct the attention of the people to the unity of the Creator.

Now, when Noah appeared, the signs that were established in the law pointed out that which is to come, by divulging the unity of Hakem; (may his power be glorified!)

At the time of Noah, the disciples of Truth were strong in the knowledge of the unity of Hakem, but weak in the knowledge of the Son, and of his existing in the Father.

And when the term of the law of Noah was completed, there appeared Abraham, the son of Azr, and his supporter, one of the sons of Ishmael, and after them, seven priests.

And the people of Truth acknowledged the law of Abraham, and accepted the invitations of the priests that came after him, and the knowledge of the unity of Hakem.

And from the seed of Abraham prophets appeared, like unto Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and others.

Then appeared Moses, the son of Imran, and the people

of Truth followed his law, and the interpretation of his supporter, who was Joshua, the son of Nun.

Then there appeared other prophets, and their power in the knowledge of the unity was as the amount of saliva in the throat of man.

And these were Isaiah, Hezekiah, Nathaniel, Daniel, Doodoosalem, and the like, from among the prophets.

From among the respectable Doctors—Pithagoros, Plato, and Aristotle; the peace of God be upon them!

Chapter 12.

Now, when Jesus, the son of Joseph, appeared with the New Testament, and established himself as the Lord, the Messiah who is Jesus, (the peace of God be upon him!) he was accompanied by his four apostles, John, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, (the peace of God be upon them!) and the people of Truth profited by his revelations, although they pretended to the truth, in the law, and copied the law of Moses in explaining the law of Jesus.

Then appeared Simon the happy, and the people of Truth were on his side, until the time of the seven priests had passed away.

And the strength of the belief, *of the seven priests*, in the unity, was as the amount of saliva in the throat of man.

After this, Mohamed, the son of Abdalla, appeared with his law, which is the law of Islam.

And Mohamed established Ebn Abi Taleb as his supporter, and all the disciples of Truth followed the law of Islam, as they had done every other law that had preceded it.

Now Mohamed was in the time of Suleiman, the Persian.

When Ali ebn Abi Taleb came forward with his explanations *of the law of Islam*, the people of Truth believed in them, and continued therein, until seven priests had passed away after him.

These seven priests were of the seed of Mohamed, and are Hassan, Hussein, Ali Ebn Abi il Hussein, Ebn Mohamed Ali, Jaffar Ebn Mohamed, Ismail ebn Jaffar, and the name of the seventh is not known.

The time of Mohamed ebn Abdalla was more evident and more demonstrative of power than all the epochs that preceded him; consequently, they pretended for singleness in Ebn Ali Taleb, moreover because the prophets Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus foretold the appearance of a man, the highest of the high, whose rank is great, whose name be glorified!

This was Ali ebn Abi Taleb.

When the term of the priesthood of Mohamed Ebn Abdalla was completed, Mohamed ebn Ismail, the prophet, appeared, whose law is the final of all laws inciting to the right path; and he is from the seed of Ali ebn Taleb.

And to Mohamed ebn Ismail there is a supporter secretly established in Paradise, and no one knows his name, because he does not appear in the manifestation of the law which we have.

But it is certain that Mohamed is a prophet, and that God has sent him an evident book; and he has an open law and a secret law, and his works are the works of the eloquent that have passed before him.

Not that Mohamed is not like unto one of them, but that he is their partner against injustice.

And he has brought forward the law, the invitation to

annihilation, the establishment of a delegate, and the promulgation of licentiousness.

Chapter 13.

When Mohamed ebn Ismail (محمد بن اسمعيل) appeared, and introduced his law, the disciples of Truth believed in his law and in his prophecies, and they recognised his excellence and his supporter, who was Sayeed il Muhdi ebn Ahmed (سعيد المهدي ابن احمد).

And it is through Mohamed ebn Ismail and his supporter that are made perfect the perfect in eloquence, (النطقا) the holy men (الاوصيا), and the priesthood (الايده).

Then the power of Mohamed passed to his descendants, who are the priests, the respected, until it reached Sayeed il Muhdi, and from Sayeed il Muhdi it passed to the sessions (المقامات), and ultimately appeared openly in the kingdom and in the government, *through* Kaem (القايم), Mansoor (المنصور), Maaz (المعز), Azeez (العزيز), and Hakem (الحاكم), the Eternal, the Assisted, the Cherished, the Beloved, and the Governor.

When the time of rejoicing and of the last Godly manifestation arrived, the wisdom *of God* ordained the appearance of the Prophet Zacharias, and this time was that of the third priest of the priesthood of Mohamed ebn Ismail.

Before this time, the perfect "Mind" became manifested in Abi Zacharias in the form of verse from the Creator, sent through Karoon (قارون), and the Lord had given forth a law which was the perfect "Soul" represented by Abi Saad (ابي سعد), the twenty-first anointed.

And the existing of Abi Zacharias was in the assembly spiritually (بالمجالس باطن), and to him are attributed miracles secretly performed, which will be explained by the most powerful of the Unitarians to the weak among them.

Chapter 14.

Abi Zacharias sent Karoon to the country of the Yeman, and surnamed him the Muhdi (director).

And Karoon understood the secrets of the four books, viz., the Psalms, the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Koran; and his faith was promulgated all over the earth.

And his faith was in the place of one whole day (فكانت دعوته عندك يوم كامل), of the three days mentioned inthe Gospel, on the preaching of Jesus, who said to the people, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it after three days."

And it was meant by the three days, that the faith (دعوة) of Jesus should last half a day, from twelve o'clock to the evening, and the faith of Soleiman the Persian, from the time of the appearing of the Comforter, who is Mohamed, was to last one entire day; and the faith of Karoon also one entire day; and the faith of Kaem il Muntazar Hamza ebn Ali (القايم المنتظر حمزه بن علي), at the time of his manifestation, half a day from morning to noon.

In the preaching (دعوة) of the Lord the Messiah, no manifestation takes place; for Jesus said unto the people, "My time is not consummated; after me will appear a director who is prevented from coming at this time."

And the Creator, may He be praised! manifested himself

corporeally, in the time of the fourth Heaven, in Abdalla ebn Ahmed, under the name of Ali; he is the exalted over all exalted, unto whom belongeth the right of command.

He also manifested himself corporeally in the time of the fifth Heaven, which is Mohamed ebn Abdalla, under the name of Maal.

The appearing of Maal, (may he be honoured and glorified!) was in the country of Tadmor to the East, and his appearance was extremely beautiful and glorious, and he was most rich, and travelled alone with one thousand camels laden with goods and merchandise.

The duration of Maal, the exalted, lasted until the time of the fifth priest was completed, who is Mohamed, the aforesaid.

After him appeared his son Hussein, who is the sixth Heaven, and after Hussein, his son Abdalla il Muhdi, who is called Ebn Ahmed, but who should be called Muhdi, and after him, Sayeed il Muhdi, who is the seventh from among the prophets.

The Creator again manifested himself under the name of Kaem, as an infant, and in appearance as the son of Maal.

And when the Almighty Maal chose to disappear, he called unto him Sayeed il Muhdi, and commanded him to serve our Lord Kaem, may his name be glorified! and made him the lord of the priesthood, and consigned to his care property and merchandise, and appointed him regent over the education of Kaem.

And the power of the disciples of Truth, during the time of Sayeed il Muhdi and during the time of his supporter Cadah, was most great.

And the government of the prophets, and of the advisers,

and of the priests, came to an end with the disappearance of Sayeed il Muhdi, in whom mercy was most perfect, and whose coming to give advice to the world, and whose growing up, and the passing of whose spirit, gave knowledge to the souls of those who were in the Truth; and he was glorified, the most glorious.

And then appeared as a true prophet Hamza ebn Ali, God's praise be upon him!

Chapter 15.

At the completion of this era of the world, there commenced a second era, and the wisdom of God thought proper to produce Kaem, the Almighty, with Sayeed il Muhdi.

And those who recognised the unity of God were steadfast in the secrets of truth, and in the faith of Ali ebn Abi Taleb, his progeny.

And the secrets of Truth succeeded from one to another unto Sayeed il Muhdi, and from Sayeed il Muhdi the secrets of Truth reached the Lord of Truth (may his name be reverenced!) and the people recognised Kaem as a powerful God, because they had witnessed his miracles, and because he made manifest unto them wonderful miracles whilst he was an infant under the guardianship of Sayeed il Mudhi.

When Il Kaem grew up, he took to the priesthood, and when he appeared in public, mounted on horseback, with the soldiers in his service, Sayeed il Muhdi used to walk before him, calling aloud, "I am the servant and slave of our Lord Il Kaem, and the priesthood was a thing in my consignment, and he has taken it from me."

After this, Sayeed died, and his soul passed to Makhled

ebn Kebdad (مخلد بن كبداد), one of the kings of the West.

Now, before Sayeed died, he had been an enemy of Keis Dad (الكسيداد), the father of Makhled.

And when Makhled grew up, and his age was six, he was informed that Sayeed had been the enemy of his father; so he prepared to fight, and assembled his soldiers to go against Il Kaem (may his name be reverenced!)

And when Makhled was eleven years old, the number of his soldiers reached four hundred thousand.

The reason of his assembling all these was, because the Almighty had said, "Behold the people of the cursed and abominable Makhled ebn Kebdad, surnamed Abi Yazeed (ابي يذيد), there are no people who are more sinful, more disorderly, and drunkards."

Now, Abi Yazeed desired to have a contention with Il Kaem, (may his glory be sanctified!) and among his soldiers there was cheapness, and health, and peace, whilst to Il Kaem's *soldiers* there was only his presence and the presence of the forty-six.

And the soldiers of Il Kaem were few; but he granted them his assistance and majesty, and went forth in person with them, to fight Abi Yazeed.

And he defeated them, and killed them, and destroyed them, and revenged himself; and when this great miracle became known, the faith of Il Kaem, the most glorious, reached the country of the West, and was promulgated all over the earth.

Chapter 16.

At the close of the time of the Almighty Kaem, the Creator most praised manifested himself bodily and in the

priesthood in Mansoor, and it was apparently visible that he was the son of Il Kaem, and that Il Kaem had transferred upon him the priesthood, and had clothed him with the Cailifat, and assigned his power to him.

And the faith of Mansoor was promulgated all over the earth, and made known to all assemblies, and Mansoor performed miracles, and changed some of the articles of the law, as the Almighty Kaem had also done before him, and his priesthood took place in the country of the West.

After Mansoor came the chief Maaz in the priesthood, and the faith was assigned to him, and he acted as did Mansoor, and his time began in the country of the West.

And Maaz sent Abdalla, whose name was Gouhair, with soldiers to Egypt, and he defeated the sons of Abbas, (بني العباس), and conquered Cairo.

After this, the Almighty Maaz went to Cairo, and concluded his faith in that city.

After Maaz, appeared the chief Azeez, the Almighty, and his appearance took place in Cairo, and to him Maaz consigned the priesthood.

And the Almighty Azeez manifested signs which explained and made evident the unity, and he performed miracles which could not be performed by any one, unless one inspired by God.

And he proclaimed his faith, and his miracles were known throughout the world, and there remained not a single man who did not receive the faith. Praises be to him whose grace has been so promulgated by reason of his mercy!

Then the Creator most praised appeared in Hakem; may his power be glorified, in Cairo!

And the five chiefs, Il Kaem, Mansoor, Maaz, Azeez, and Hakem appeared as though they were sons of each

other; and this secret priesthood passed together with the heavenly posts, from the post of Zacharias to the post of Hakem (may his power be glorified!) until it reached its real proprietor, Hamza, who, in truth, is the Kaem; the celebrated Hamza ebn Ali; the blessings of God be upon him!

Chapter 17.

The repetition of these heavenly characters in human bodies, with the changes of names and appearance, was to facilitate the understanding of the people, to make perfect the way, and to establish a permanent law; otherwise these heavenly characters are all one.

When Hakem, who is most praiseworthy, renounced the priesthood, and clothed Il Kaem therewith, from whom it came eventually to Hamza ebn Ali (the praises of God be upon him!) the Kaem, that is, Hamza, established his faith, and made "the Soul" his law, and my lord "the Word" weak among the powerful.

And *Hamza* established the order of the truth in his faith, and also ordered Hakem to follow the unity of God and the Godhead, and the Unitarians entered into his faith with many people from among the people of tradition (التاويل) and the accepted; and their entering was in ease, and with inclination to rest.

But there arose among the people a dispute and contention, and they discovered that God was angry, for he punished them, and hid himself from them; then the faith was changed, and innovations were introduced.

After a year, the Creator Almighty *again* manifested his unity, and he was glorified, and the faith re-esta-

blished, the laws were made manifest, the covenants (المواثيق) were written, and Il Kaem (the praises of God be upon him!) invited the people to the Unity, established the law, and taught the people of Truth to contend among each other to enter into the faith.

And when it pleased God Almighty to withdraw himself, he brought Ali the Evident, and made him take forty oaths *to the effect* that he would not raise affliction or misfortune on his chosen ones, the Unitarians.

Chapter 18.

Then the Almighty withdrew himself, and then appeared upon earth an Evil Spirit; and this Evil Spirit remained on earth seven years, and his limits were from Antioch to Alexandria.

And the companions of this evil spirit were tempting the Unitarians, of whom they gained a great number, both men, women, and children.

This great Tempter had been spoken of and alluded to in the Gospel in several places, and Suleiman the Persian (peace be upon him!) had also referred to him in the following verse:—

> "The Evil Spirit of Resurrection had only one eye from the time of his setting out from Aleppo, in the days of evil;
> And all the Greeks were his supporters in his undertakings which were only defeated by making war."

Since this Tempter was formerly prophesied of, the Unitarians supported the evils and misfortunes brought upon them with patience.

Then appeared my Lord Bohaddeen, and he was possessed of "the order of Truth;" and Moktanna Bohaddeen was the last that appeared; after him no laws

remained uncompleted; he fulfilled the creation, and completed the conversion of the people, and delivered the rest of the Unitarians.

The time of the prophecy of Moktanna was seventeen years, and he used to refer his Epistles to the priest that was concealed in a place known to him, and also to the three spirits, "the Soul," "the Word," and "the Preceding," who were also concealed in a place known to my Lord Moktanna.

And when Moktanna disappeared, he published his noble Epistles, with the Epistles of Il Kaem, and the Epistles of Hamza, the wisdom of Unitarianism, which Epistles showed that these noble persons appeared personally, and set down a law, which law teaches us to know the Laws, the Beginning, the End, the Promise, the Threat, the Reward, the Punishment, the Past, and the Future.

And this is what we think proper to show from the time of Revelation to the day of the last resurrection.

ABSTRACT OF WHAT IS NECESSARY FOR A UNITARIAN TO KNOW, TO BELIEVE, AND TO OBSERVE, TAKEN BRIEFLY FROM THE BOOK OF LAW (كتاب الفريض).

It is necessary that the Unitarian should possess the knowledge of four things:—

1. The knowledge of our Lord God (may his name be exalted!)
2. The knowledge of Il Kaem.
3. The knowledge of the Prophets.
4. The knowledge of those virtues which it is necessary to observe.

It is also necessary *that the Unitarian* should believe in the Almighty God in his human form, without mixing it with questions of "Where," or "How much," or "Who;" and that he should believe that that same figure has no flesh, nor blood, nor body, nor weight; but that it is like unto a mirror when you put the same into a scale to weigh it, and look at yourself in it; for does it weigh more by your looking at your face in it? So is the figure of the Almighty: it does not eat, nor drink, nor feel, nor can incidents or time alter it. It is invisible, but contains the power of being ever present, and it appeared to us on earth in a human form, that we should be better able to comprehend it, there being no power in us wherewith to compare the divinity.

It is also necessary *that the Unitarian* should believe in the Almighty God represented in the Ten Directors, who are, Ali, El Bar, Zacharias, Elias, Maal, El Kaem, Mansoor, Maaz, Azeez, and Hakem, and all are One God, and there is no other God but him.

The highest Ali was all his time invisible, and there was no Priesthood with him, and his appearance was at the beginning of the world. El Bar was invisible in the Priesthood.

After El Bar appeared Adam il Gerone, who is Enoch, with the Unitarian Law, and he followed the Unitarian steps of El Bar. After him, appeared seven Priests from the "Order of Truth," who followed his steps; and after these, appeared the givers of the Laws, who are Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Mohamet, Mohamet the second, and Sayeed il Muhdi, and all these were one Soul. Then the Priesthood reached its rightful owner, who is the victorious Kaem Hamza ebn Ali, (the praises of God be upon him!)

that is, "The Truth of the Tongue," "The preservance of Friendship between Brothers," "The Abandonment of the Worship of Idols," "The disbelief in evil spirits and deceivers," "The worship of Our Lord in every age and generation," "To be satisfied with the Acts of God whatever they might be," and "To be resigned to his will."

"The Truth of the Tongue" is the belief in the divinity of El Hakem, (praises be to him!) the belief in the priesthood of the Kaem (*Hamza*), and in the virtue of the Four Prophets, their nobility and their perfection; the belief in the Prophets of Truth, and in their prophecy and their qualifications; the belief in the Priests, the Leaders; the belief in the Noble Wisdom which is the saving religion; the belief in the transmigration of Souls from one body to another; the belief in the Resurrection from the dead and in the reward or punishment which will assuredly follow it.

"The preservance of Friendship between Brothers" is to recognise their ranks and to love them whether they be near or far from us; to humble ourselves before our superiors; to treat well those who are low *in rank* among us, to support them both secretly and publicly, to give them their due rights whether temporal or spiritual, and to regard them as friends.

"The Abandonment of the Worship of Idols" is the abandonment of the doctrine of those who believe in the Tanzeel (*Koran*), and those who say that God is not present everywhere, and those who believe in the Traditions, and who make Ali ebn Abi Taleb like unto God, and say that God is not One.

" The disbelief in evil spirits and deceivers" is to curse the devils and those who belong to the " order of Falsehood."

" The Worship of our Lord in every age and generation" is, that man should believe that he is separate in his person, and has no visible body, form, or weight.

" The law to be satisfied with his acts whatever they might be," is to be resigned to his will, and this resignation has ten degrees, namely: The Knowledge,—The Belief,—The Authority,—The Obedience,—The Acceptance,—The Hearing,—The Trust,—The Reference,—The Patience,—and the Thanksgiving. The Acts of the Almighty Creator, of which it is man's duty to be satisfied, are numerous, and the greatest of them have Ten degrees also, namely, The Revelation,—The concealment,—The Weakness,—The Miracles,—The system,—Humility,—Lawfulness,—Unlawfulness,—Fate and Destiny.

And these are the Seven Laws which belong to the Unity, and " The Truth of the Tongue" is instead of Prayer, and "The perseverance of friendship between brothers" is instead of giving alms, and "The abandonment of the worship of Idols" is instead of fasting, and "the disbelief in evil spirits" is instead of the "Proofs," and "The acknowledgment of Our Lord" is instead of the "Two Proofs," and "To be satisfied with his acts" is instead of Warfare, and "The resignation to his will" is instead of Authority.

The conclusion is, that whosoever knows and believes in what has preceded, and is sound of mind and body, and of full age, and free from servitude, will be of those who are destined to the ranks, and entitled to be present at the private assemblies, at which whosoever is present will be saved by Almighty God, and

whosoever is absent will repent. May God facilitate his ways of good, and pour upon us his blessing! He is the Assistant, the Giver of Victory, the Wise and the Experienced! Amen.

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